A Short Treatise on the Secrets of Wuḍū'
as Portrayed by Imam Ali (as)

(Qā'id al-Ghurr al-Muḥajjalīn), Imam 'Alī ('a)

SEEKING LIGHT

Written by *Shaykh Muḥammad M. Khalfān*

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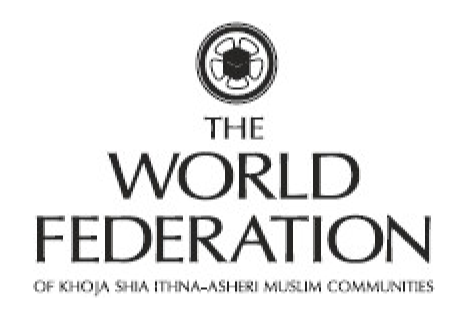
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In the Name of Allah, the All-Beneficent, the All-Merciful



O Allah, shower Your mercy on
Muhammad and his infallible progeny

HUMBLE PRESENTATION

I humbly present this short treatise to



Amir al-mu'minin 'Ali ('a) who reminded mankind of the stations of the Hereafter through the supplications of *Wudu'*, and thereby inculcated vigilance in them, made them resolute to change and transform themselves, and attain light and brilliance of heart.

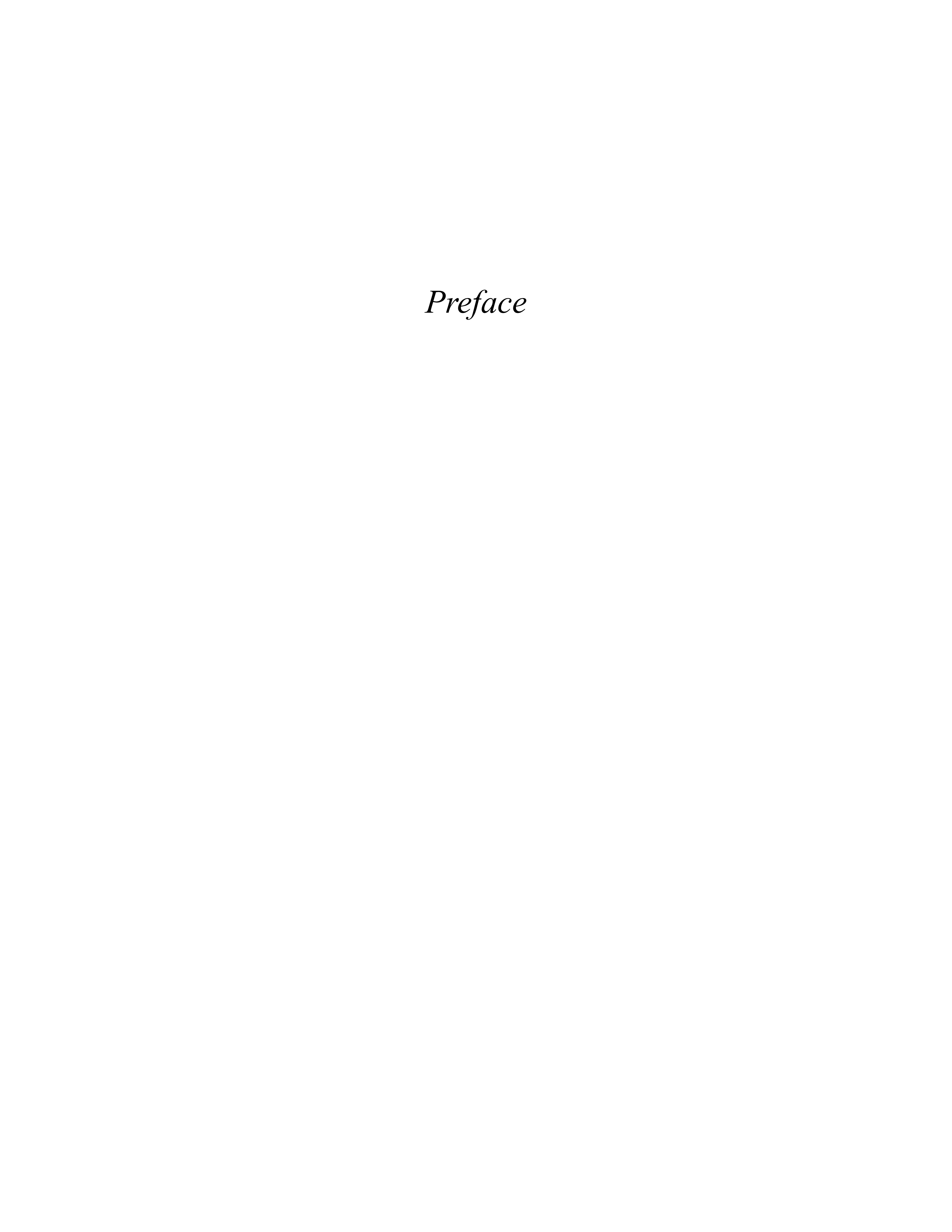
and



Sayyidah Nisa' al-'Alamin Hadrat Fatimah ('a) who was named *al-Zahra'* due to the light and brilliance that emanated from her effulgent being.

Muhammad Khalfan
The Holy Neighbourhood of Hadrat Ma'sumah ('a)
Qum al-Muqaddasah
Rajab al-Murajjab

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The Importance of Continual Purification

Explaining the philosophy of *Wudu'* Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

...ما يُرِيدُ اللهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ وَلٰكِنْ **يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ**
وَلِيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

…Allah does not desire to put you to hardship, *but He desires to purify you*, and to complete His blessing upon you so that you may give thanks. (5:6)

Those who can appreciate subtle allusions understand the fact that the above verse has ample to reveal. The phrase '*Allah does not desire to put you to hardship*' is a language of love and attraction.[1] Thereafter, instead of saying '*but He desires that you purify yourselves*' the Beloved says '*but He (Himself) desires to purify you*'. Although it is the *mutawaddi'* (the doer of *Wudu'*), who undertakes the action of *Wudu'*, it is the Beloved who says He is the one who carries out the purification process. This reveals how close He is to the one who purifies himself with *Wudu'*. It also alludes to the reality that our actions have no effects that are independent from Allah. We should not surmise that our actions of purification would purify us independently from Him. He alone is the purifier and none else.

Underlining the importance of *constant* self-purification, Allah, the Exalted, teaches us the following principle:



…Indeed Allah loves those who often return [in penitence] *and loves those who purify themselves*. (2:222)

In this verse the objects of love are (a) those who often return in penitence, and (b) those who purify themselves.

We should note however, that the word *al-mutatahhirin* employed in the above verse does not merely signify those who purify themselves, but those who *always* purify themselves. This is because *al-mutatahhirin*, the plural of *al-mutatahhir*, is an active participle (*ism al-fa'il*) which confers the meaning of continuity. The entire abovementioned clause also conveys the importance of what is being said. This is because:

a) It is a nominal clause (*jumlah ismiyyah*) and thus connotes perpetuity.

b) It begins with the accusative particle *inna* which is employed for emphasis.

c) Both the penitent ones (*tawwabun*) as well as those who purify themselves (*mutatahhirun*) are preceded with a separate indefinite verb *yuhibbu* that signifies love.

d) The indefinite verbs *yuhibbu* in both cases signify constant love, because they are in the aorist form (*mudari*'). In simple words: Allah *always* loves all those who frequently repent, and He *always* loves all those who constantly purify themselves.

e) Employing the divine name Allah, which comprehends in itself all the other divine names, subtly indicates that the result of both penitence and self-purification is proximity to all the beautiful names of God.

Those with a high aspiration (*himmah 'aliyah*) must not only persevere in always maintaining the state of purity, but must develop a love for the same. The Holy Qur'an mentions a group of people who do not merely keep themselves in the state of purity, but *love* to do the same. Consider the following verse:

...لَمَسْجِدٌ أُسِّسَ عَلَى التَّقْوى مِنْ أَوَّلِ يَوْمٍ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَقُومَ فِيْهِ، فِيْهِ رِجالٌ **يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَتَطَهَّرُوا** وَاللهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُطَّهِّرِينَ

…A mosque founded on God-wariness from the [very] first day is worthier that you stand in it [for prayer]. Therein are men who *love to purify themselves*,[2] and Allah loves those who purify themselves. (9:108)

Note the phrase '*fihi rijalun yuhibbuna an yatatahharu*' which means 'Therein are men who love to constantly purify themselves', which has a very distinct and special connotation. It refers to those who are in constant love with self-purification and not those who merely practice self-purification. The aorist verb *yuhibbuna* confers this noteworthy aspect.

Wayfarers of the spiritual path of Allah have always emphasised the importance of adhering to continual purity and have practiced the same. They believe that constantly being in *Wudu'* (*dawam al-Wudu'*) reaps abundant benefits. In fact it is reckoned to be an essential element in the practical path of spiritual upliftment.

In his *Risale-ye Lubb al-Lubab*, a summarised and annotated compilation of the first series of lessons on ethics and gnosis of his mentor 'Allamah Tabataba'i (d. 1402/1981), Ayatullah Muhammad Husayn Tehrani (d. 1416/1995), when enumerating the essential conditions of spiritual wayfaring, mentions the seventeenth condition as *dawam-e taharat* (continuity of purity) and says:

و آن عبارت است از **دوام وضوء** و اغسال واجبه و غسل جمعه و ساير اغسال مستحبّه حتّى الإمكان

…and that is *to remain in Wudu' (minor ablution) continuously* and observe the obligatory major ablutions including the Friday major ablution, and perform the rest of the recommended major ablutions to the extent possible.[3]

In one of his lessons on the mystical masterpiece *Misbah al- Uns,*[4] Ayatullah Hasan Zadeh Amuli (b. 1350/1929), a contemporary scholar of

mystical sciences and a former disciple of ‘Allamah Tabataba’i, is reported to have said:

آنچه در عرفان عملی مهم است، سه چیز است: الف: **طهارت و دوام آن**، ب: همت، ج: استقامت

That which is important in practical gnosis (‘*irfan-e ‘amali*) are three things: (a) Purity *(taharat) and its continuity (dawam)*, (b) Aspiration (*himmat*), and (c) Steadfastness (*istiqamat*).[5]

In another statement, this great contemporary mystic is reported to have said:

ای برادر! بدان که وضو نور است **و تداوم آن** ، باعث ارتقاء به عالم قدس خواهد شد

O brother, know that *Wudu’* is light (*nur*), *and its continuation* (*tadawum*) will bring about an advancement to the realm of sanctity (*quds*).[6]

The late mystic and legal authority Ayatullah Muhammad Taqi Bahjat al-Fumani (d. 1430/2009), a disciple of the august mystic Ayatullah Sayyid ‘Ali Qadi Tabataba’i (d. 1366/1947), is reported to have once said:

من خودم خیلی دلم می خواهد همیشه با وضوء باشم، اما قادر بر آن نیستم، شما اگر می توانید رعایت کنید **و دائم الوضوء باشید** که آثار بسیارش را خواهید دید

I myself really want to always be in the state of *Wudu’* but am incapable of the same;[7] if you are able, then observe it, *and always be in the state of Wudu’*, for you will experience its manifold benefits.

Ayatullah Shaykh ‘Abdullah al-Mamaqani (d. 1351/1932), a revered Shi‘ah authority of Islamic law, in his book *Mir’at al- Rashad*, which he wrote for his lovers, children, and descendents, addressing his son, says:

وعليك بُنيّ بالكون على الطهارة مهما أمكن، فإنها سلاح المؤمن لدفع الشيطان وتمنع عذاب القبر وتقضي الحاجة وتزيد في العمر والرزق وتورث مزيد الجاه وعلو المكان والرفعة وصحة البدن والفرح والنشاط وتزيد في الحفظ والذهن

And on you, my dear little son, is to be in the state of purity as much as is possible, for indeed it is a weapon for the believer to dispel the Satan and it hinders the punishment of the grave, accomplishes one's need, increases in one's lifespan and provision, necessitates a greater position and higher station and elevation, brings about physical health, happiness and vigour, and increases in memory.[8]

Ayatullah Shahab al-Din al-Mar'ashi (d. 1338/1990), a great scholar and legal authority, in one of his epistles of counsels called *al-Tariq wa al-Mahajjah li Thamarat al-Muhjah*, referring to his son, says:

وأوصيه **بدوام الطهارة** فإنه منير للباطن ومزيل للهموم والأحزان

I advise him [my son] *to be in constant purity*, for indeed it enlightens the inner self and removes anxieties (*humum*) and sorrows.[9]

In his *Lawaqih al-Anwar al-Qudsiyyah fi Bayan al-'Uhud al-Muhammadiyyah*, the well-known Egyptian mystic-scholar al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Sha'rani[10] (d. 973/1565) says:

أخذ علينا العهد العام من رسول اللهِ (ص) **أن نحافظ على دوام الوضوء** وعلى تجديده لنكون مستعدين لقبول الواردات الإلهية، فإن صدقته تعالى على عباده لا تنقطع ليلا ولا نهارا، ومن كشف الله تعالى عن بصيرته وجد نفسه جالسا بين يدي الله عز وجل على الدوام، وهذا أمر يتأكد فعله على أكابر العلماء والصالحين، لأن معظم الواردات الإلهية في العلوم الظاهرة والباطنة تنزل عليهم، وقد أغفل ذلك كثير منهم

The general covenant was taken from us by Allah's Apostle (s) that *we uphold the continuity of [the state of] Wudu'* and its renewal, in order to be ready to accept divine inspirations (*al-waridat al-ilahiyyah*), for surely His divine charity on His servants is not cut throughout the night and day; and one whose inner vision is unveiled by Allah *would find oneself always seated beside Allah.* And this is an act greatly emphasised for the great scholars and men of virtue, for indeed most of the divine inspirations on the exoteric and esoteric sciences descend on them; but indeed many of them are oblivious of that.[11]

The aforementioned were directions of scholars of authority on the importance of observing continual purity. The following are reports of scholars who are narrated to have observed this important practice:

1. Rashid al-Din Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn Shahrashub al-Mazandarani (d. 588/1192), is one of the venerated scholars of the Shi'ah world. One of his masterpieces is his magnum opus called *Manaqib Al Abi Talib* ('a) where he mentions the virtues of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). The well-known lexicographer, Abu al-Tahir Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Firuzabadi (d. 817/1414) in his book *al-Bulghah fi Tarajim A'immah al-Nahw wa al-Lughah*, says the following about him:

وكان واسع العلم كثير العبادة **دائم الوضوء**

Indeed he was vast in knowledge, worshipped a great deal, and constantly remained in *Wudu'*...[12]

2. Ayatullah Sayyid 'Ali Qadi Tabataba'i, the mentor of 'Allamah Tabataba'i in divine gnosis, is reported to have said:

20 سال تمام است كه وضو دارم **و بي وضو نبوده ام**، الا حين تجديد وضو و نخوابيدم مگر با طهارت آبي

It is twenty complete years now that I have always been in the state of *Wudu'*, and I have never remained without *Wudu'* save when I would like to renew my *Wudu'*; and I have never slept except after purification with water [i.e. *Wudu'*].[13]

3. The following has been narrated regarding Martyr Ayatullah ‘Abd al-Husayn Dasteghayb Shirazi (d. 1402/1981), a great revolutionary, scholar of ethics, and a disciple of the late Ayatullah Sayyid ‘Ali Qadi Tabataba’i:

وكان دائم الوضوء مداوماً على الرياضات الروحية تاركاً للملذات

He was always in the state of *Wudu’*, constantly engaged in spiritual exercises, and always abandoned the [mundane] pleasures.[14]

4. The well-known mystical scholar Ayatullah Sayyid ‘Abd al- Karim Kashmiri (d. 1419/1999), a disciple of Sayyid ‘Ali Qadi Tabataba’i, is reported to have said:

ملاصدرا **دائم الوضو بوده** و بسيار قوى ومانندش بعد از او نيامده است

Mulla Sadra (d. 1050/1640) would always remain in the state of ritual purity of *Wudu’* and was very powerful; and after him none has come like him.[15]

5. The wife of Martyr Murtada Mutahhari (d. 1399/1979),[16] is reported to have said:

یکی از مهمترین خصوصیات رفتاری شهید مطهری که برایم جذابیت فراوانی داشت **دائم الوضو بودن او بود،** استاد حتی زمانی که از خواب بیدار می‌شد ابتدا وضو گرفته و سپس به سایر کارها می‌پرداخت و من این خصوصیت رفتاری ایشان را بسیار دوست داشتم

One of the most important behavioural characteristics of Martyr Mutahhari that was very attractive to me was his practice of always remaining in ritual purity (*Wudu’*). Even when he would wake up from sleep he would do *Wudu’* first and then engage himself in other works. And I would love this characteristic of his.[17]

6. The following is narrated regarding the author of the immortal magnum opus *al-Ghadir,* Ayatullah ‘Abd al-Husayn Tabrizi Najafi (d. 1390/1970), well-known as ‘Allamah Amini:

امینی دائم الوضو بود و صبح ها، هر روز به حرم حضرت امیر مشرف می شد و سپس به کتابخانه می آمد

[‘Allamah] Amini would always be in the state of *Wudu’* and would visit the sanctuary (*haram*) of Hadrat Amir [al- mu’minin ‘Ali (‘a)] every morning, and then he would come to the library.[18]

7. Ayatullah ‘Abbas «zadi Najafabadi (d. 1412/1991), a disciple of Imam Khumayni, is reported to have said about Imam Khumayni as follows:

امام دائم الوضو بودند. بارها قبل از نماز برای تجدید وضو می‌رفتند و وضو گرفتنشان قدری طول می کشید چون مستحبات را رعایت می کردند

Imam [Khumayni] would always be in the state of *Wudu’* and would go to renew his *Wudu’* a number of times before prayer; and his *Wudu’* would take a while because he would [also] observe supererogatory actions.[19]

8. Martyr General Sayyid ‘Ali Sayyad Shirazi (d. 1419/1999), the former Commander of Iran’s Ground Forces and a member of the Supreme Defence Council would also have the habit of preserving the state of ritual purity. According to a report published by Islamic Revolution Document Center, one of his co-combatant and close associates, Brigadier General Sayyid Hessam Hashemi, says that Martyr Sayyad Shirazi would always be in the state of *Wudu’*, and after performing *Wudu’* he would recite two units of supererogatory prayer.[20]

There are several narrations of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) which allude to both physical as well as spiritual benefits of continuity of *Wudu’* (*dawam al-wudu’*). The following are noteworthy examples:

1. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

لاَ يُحَافِظُ عَلَى الْوُضُوْءِ إِلاَّ مُؤْمِنٌ

None save the faithful one preserves the state of ritual purity [of *Wudu’*].[21]

In this *hadith*, the word *al-muhafazah* (preservation) signifies the continuity of the state of *Wudu'*. However, not every faithful person can perform that. Hence, the faithful in the above tradition refers to an elevated class of the faithful ones who have determined to journey to the proximity of Allah.

In his commentary of the above tradition, al-Munawi (d.1031/1621) in his *Fayd al-Qadir*[22] explains the term faithful one (*mu'min*) as *kamil al-iman* (one with perfect faith). Hence, according to him, not every faithful one has the succour to observe continual ritual purity.

2. In a very beautiful sacred tradition (*hadith qudsi*) narrated from the Holy Prophet (s), Allah says:

مَن أحدَثَ وَلَم يَتَوَضّأْ فَقَدْ جَفَانِيْ، وَمَن أحدَث وَتَوَضّأَ وَلَم يُصَلِّ رَكعَتَينِ فَقد جَفَانِيْ، وَمَن أحدَثَ وَتَوَضّأَ وَصَلَّى رَكعَتَينِ وَدَعَانِي وَلَم أُجِبْهُ فِيْمَا سَألَنِيْ مِنْ أُمُورِ دِينِهِ وَدُنياهُ فَقَد جَفَوتُهُ؛ وَلَسْتُ بِرَبٍّ جافٍ

Whosoever's *Wudu'* breaks and he does not perform *Wudu'*, has indeed turned away from Me; and whosoever's *Wudu'* breaks and he performs *Wudu'*, but does not pray two units of prayer has indeed turned away from Me; and whosoever's *Wudu'* breaks and he performs *Wudu'* and prays two units, and calls upon Me, and I do not respond to him in what he asked from Me about his religious and worldly affairs, then indeed I have turned away from him; and I am not a lord who turns away.[23]

If we carefully reflect on this *hadith* we would realise how divine love encompasses each and every one of us despite our ignorance, oblivion, and negligence. Purity and ablution are necessities for the human being; and it is he alone who benefits from these acts and not Allah. Yet the All-Beloved reckons one who does not purify oneself after one's *Wudu'* is broken, as one who has shunned and turned away from Him. Although the human being does not deserve anything, for he has nothing of his own, not even his soul, yet the All-Merciful says that He can never turn away from one who purifies himself and prays two units of prayer and asks for his needs.

The effulgent mystic Shaykh Mirza Jawad al-Maliki al-Tabrizi (d. 1343/1924) in his *Asrar al-Salat*, after narrating the aforementioned *hadith qudsi*, says:

ثم إنه كان بعض مشايخي- قدس الله سره وجزاه عني خير جزاء المعلمين المربيين- كان يوصيني بالعمل بمضمون هذه الرواية ويقول: اسجدوا بعد هاتين الركعتين وادعوا الله في السجدة أن يرزقكم معرفته ومحبته

One of my Shaykhs[24]- may Allah sanctify his spirit and bestow him with the best of the recompense of teachers and mentors - would advise me to act according to this narration and say: Go to prostration after these two units of prayer and pray to Allah in the state of prostration (*sajdah*) to provide you with knowledge of Him and love for Him.[25]

The great contemporary mystic Ayatullah Hasan Zadeh Amuli, after mentioning the aforementioned *hadith qudsi* in his epistle on meeting Allah, says:

واعلم يا حبيبي أن الوضوء نور، والدوام على الطهارة سبب لارتقائك إلى عالم القدس، هذا الدستور العظيم النفع مُجرّب عند أهله جدًا فعليك بالمواظبة

عليها، ثم عليك بعُلُوّ الهِمّة وكِبَر النفس فإذا صليت الركعتين فلا تسأله تبارك وتعالى إلا ما لا يَبيد ولا يَنفد ولا يفنى، فلا تطلب منه إلا إياه وليكن لسان حالك هكذا:

ما از تو نداريم بغير از تو تمنا

حلوا بكسى ده كه محبت نچشيده است

فإن من ذاق حلاوة محبته تعالى يجد دونها تفها، على أن ما يطلب مما سواه كل واحد منها مظهر اسم من أسمائه فإذا وجد الأصل كان فروعه حاضرة عنده، وقلت في أبيات:

چرا زاهد اندر هواى بهشت است

چرا بيخبر از بهشت آفرين است

وقال العارف المتأله صدر الدين الدزفولي قدس سره:

خدايا زاهد از تو حور مي خواهد قصورش بين

به جنت مي گريزد از درت يارب شعورش بين

فإذا صليت فقل ساجدا: ((**اَللّٰهُمَّ ارْزُقْنِيْ حَلاَوَةَ ذِكْرِكَ وَلِقَائِكَ، وَالْحُضُوْرَ عِنْدَكَ**)) ونحوها

Know, O my dear one, that *Wudu'* is light, and always remaining in the state of purity is a cause for your advancement to the realm of sanctity. This directive of great advantage is successfully implemented by its people. Therefore upon you is to adhere to it, and you must have a high aspiration and a magnanimous spirit. Then when you have prayed the two units [as mentioned in the *hadith qudsi*], do not ask Him, the Blessed and Exalted,

save that which neither ceases to exist, nor finishes, nor turns to extinction. Therefore do not seek from Him save Himself, and the speech of your state must be as follows:

We do not aspire from Thee other than Thee
Give sweetmeat to one who has not tasted love

For indeed whosoever tastes the sweetness of love for Him, the Exalted, finds other than Him to be insignificant. Besides, each of that which is sought other than Him is a locus of the manifestation (*mazhar*) of a name of His names. Thus if he gets the Source, its derivatives are present with Him:

Why is the abstinent after Paradise?
Why is he oblivious of the Creator of Paradise?

And the divine gnostic Sadr al-Din al-Dezfuli (may his kernel be sanctified)[26] said:

O God, the abstinent (*zahid*) seeks from you the large-eyed damsels, look at how deficient he is!
He escapes from Thy door towards Paradise, O Lord, look at how short-sighted he is!

Having prayed [the two units as mentioned in the *hadith qudsi*] say in the state of prostration [a supplication such as,] 'O Allah, provide me with the sweetness of remembering You, meeting You, and being present in Your company' and the like.[27]

3. Advising Imam 'Ali ('a), the Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

يَا عَلِيُّ، دَاوِمْ عَلَى الْوُضُوْءِ، فَإِنَّ الْمَلاَئِكَةَ يَسْتَغْفِرُوْنَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ مَا دَامَ عَلَى الطَّهُوْرِ وَلَمْ يُحْدِثْ

O 'Ali, always maintain yourself in the state of *Wudu'*, for indeed the angels seek forgiveness for the human being as long as he is in the state of purity, and has not done any act that breaks the ritual purity.[28]

4. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

دَاوِمْ عَلَى الْوُضُوْءِ يُحِبُّكَ حَافِظَاكَ

Remain constantly in *Wudu'* and your two recording angels will love you.[29]

There are many other traditions that allude to the different benefits of *Wudu'*. According to a *hadith*, a companion of the Holy Prophet (s) tells the Prophet (s) that he desires that his provision (*rizq*) is increased, and the Prophet (s) advises him to constantly remain in the state of *taharah* (ritual purity) and he would get what he wants.[30] The Prophet (s) is also reported to have said that *Wudu'* both before meals and after meals, eradicates poverty and is among the practices of the divine Apostles.[31] In another *hadith* he (s) advises one to be in the state of *Wudu'* throughout the day and night, so that if death knocks at one's door one would leave this world as a martyr (*shahid*),[32] a station aspired by every faithful human being of exalted spirit.

Wudu' is also known as a detergent that cleanses one from sins. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

إِذَا تَوَضَّأَ الرَّجُلُ الْمُسْلِمُ خَرَجَتْ خَطَايَاهُ مِنْ سَمْعِهِ وَبَصَرِهِ وَيَدَيْهِ وَرِجْلَيْهِ، فَإِنْ قَعَدَ قَعَدَ مَغْفُوْرًا لَهُ

When a Muslim performs *Wudu'* his misdeeds exit from his sense of hearing, eyesight, two hands and two legs; and [then] if he sits, he sits in the state of being forgiven.[33]

He (s) is also reported to have said:

إِذَا تَوَضَّأَ الْعَبْدُ تَحَاطُّ عَنْهُ ذُنُوْبُهُ كَمَا تَحَاطُّ وَرَقُ هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَة

When a servant of God performs *Wudu'* his sins fall off from him in the way the leaves of this tree fall down.[34]

Frequently performing *Wudu'* is also known as one of the causes of the increase of one's lifespan. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

أَكْثِرْ مِنَ الطَّهُوْرِ يَزِدِ اللهُ فِي عُمْرِكَ

Perform *Wudu'* frequently, and Allah will increase in your lifespan.[35]

One of the fundamental reasons why the continual state of ritual purity is emphasised so much in Islam is its protective reality. According to a *hadith* of the Holy Prophet (s), *Wudu'* is reckoned to be a weapon (*silah*) that protects the faithful. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

اَلْوُضُوْءُ سِلاَحُ الْمُؤمِنِ

Wudu' is a weapon for the faithful one.

In his Persian epistle called *al-Sa'ir al-Ha'ir* (the Fascinated Wayfarer), the Uzbek mystic Najm al-Din Kubra[36] (d. 618/1221), enumerates ten conditions for spiritual wayfaring, the first and foremost being purification (*taharat*), which, he explains, has different stages. Ritual purity is only the beginning,[37] which, if one preserves constantly, can qualify one to rank from among the spiritual elite. Then he mentions twenty advantages of such purity, the seventh being its protective nature. He says:

فایدۀ هفتم- سلاح در پوشیدن، که: الوضوء سلاح المؤمن

Seventh Advantage: To get armed, for *Wudu'* is a weapon of the believer.[38]

Concerning this particular facet of *Wudu'*, the late Imam Khumayni (may Allah sanctify his noble spirit) had an important message to convey. His former disciple and a contemporary legal authority in the Islamic Seminary of contemporary Isfahan, Ayatullah Husayn al-Mazahiri[39] (b. 1934) says:

استاد بزرگوار ما حضرت امام خمینی«قدّس‌سرّه» می‌فرمودند: طهارت برای انسان، نظیر زره در جنگ است؛ یعنی همان‌طور که زره در جنگ و جهاد، حافظ انسان است، طهارت هم در زندگی و در جهاد با شیاطین جنّی و انسی، حافظ او است

Our distinguished mentor, Hadrat Imam Khumayni (may his spirit be sanctified) would say: Purity for the human being is akin to a shield in war. In other words, in the same way that a shield protects a person in the battle and holy war, purity protects him during his lifetime and while he fights against the Satans of the jinn and humans.[40]

The most fundamental motivation sufficient to compel every human being to strictly adhere to *Wudu'* is its fundamental role in facilitating and expediting the spiritual journey to the Only Beloved. If one reflects over the purpose of human life, one would treasure every moment of his life and only engage in the most important things to be done. Therefore the human being must take this means of purification seriously, and must steadfastly adhere to it so that he can enjoy both its apparent as well as hidden benefits.

Ayatullah Muhammad Shuja'i,[41] a towering insightful scholar of the contemporary era and a former disciple of 'Allamah Tabataba'i, in volume three of his mystical masterpiece *Articles- the Practical Path of Self-Purification* when discussing the importance of observing purity constantly (*mudawimat bar taharat*) says:

Constant ritual purity and being in the state of *taharat* at all times in itself has special importance in spiritual wayfaring of divine servitude. In view of the secrets it contains, which are hidden from our limited intellect and thought, it *bestows the human spirit with a special receptivity*, as a result of which it can benefit from the special Lordly bestowals of grace…[42]

And in another place he says:

…In short, in the state of purity, whether in wakefulness or sleep, the spirit of the human being acquires special radiance that bestows it with a specific ability in its ascension to God. On the contrary, when one is devoid of purity, whether awake or asleep, specific darkness settles in the spirit of the human being, which in itself hampers the spirit from ascending to God and [instead] opens the way to Satanic influences in the heart and the spirit…[43]

In view of all the aforesaid, we come to realise that constant purity is a fundamental element for both spiritual as well as material prosperity. Hence, while we have a very short opportunity in life, let us struggle to

preserve the state of purity, so that we can reap its benefits and expedite the journey to the Only Beloved.

Introduction

Wudu' is Light

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Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

اللهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ...

Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth… (24:35)

اَللهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُمْ مِنَ الظُّلُماتِ إِلَى النُّورِ...

Allah is the guardian of the faithful, He removes them from darknesses towards light… (2:257)

The word *nur* (lit. light) is defined as الظاهر في نفسه والمظهر لغيره *The self-apparent one that makes others apparent.* If taken in its most accurate sense, it is nothing but existence (*wujud*) in its purest form, which is self-apparent and makes other entities appear. The above verse tells us that only Allah is the *nur* of the heavens and the earth. All else gain their appearance from Him alone. Only He in the independent sense is self-apparent and renders all other entities to appear. This is because He alone is the primal and causeless cause or in subtler mystical terms *the only cause.* Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi (d. 672/1273), who asks us to seek a vision of *sabab-surakh-kun* (that pierces the apparent causes) so that we can apprehend the ultimate reality, in his *Mathnawi* says:

دیده اي بایـد سبــب سوراخ کــن

تا حجــب را برکــند از بیــخ و بن

تــا مسبب بینـــد انـدر لامـــکان

هرزه بیند جهد و اســـباب و دکـان

از مسبــب می رســد هــر خیر و شر

نیست اسبــاب و وســایل ای پـدر

An eye that can penetrate the cause is needed to extirpate (these) veils from root and bottom,

So that it may behold the Cause in (the world of) non-spatiality and regard exertion and earnings and shops as (mere) nonsense.

Everything good or evil comes from the Causer; causes and means, O father, are naught…[44]

In the well-known supplication of the Big Armour (*al-Jawshan al-Kabir*) we address Allah as follows:

يَاَ نُوْرَ كُلِّ نُوْرٍ، يَا نُوْرًا قَبْلَ كُلِّ نُوْرٍ، يَا نُوْراً بَعْدَ كُلِّ نُوْرٍ، يَا نُوْرًا فَوْقَ كُلِّ نُوْرٍ، يَاَ نُوْرًا لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ نُوْرٌ

O Light of every light, O Light before every light, O Light after every light, O Light above every light, O Light the like of which there is no light.[45]

Hence He alone is *nur* in the truest meaning of the word and all other *anwar* (lights) are only His manifestations.

Every entity inasmuch as it possesses perfection and bestows the same enjoys *nur*. If one is knowledgeable, for example, and bestows knowledge to others, he is a manifestation of Allah’s name *al-Nur*, if he is open-handed and educates others to be the same, he is a manifestation of the divine name

al-Nur. In short, whenever one possess perfect attributes and enables others to possess the same, he manifests light.

In our traditions, *Wudu'* is also introduced as *nur*. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

اَلْوُضُوْءُ عَلَى الْوُضُوْءِ نُوْرٌ عَلَى نُوْرٍ

Wudu' upon *Wudu'* is light upon light.[46]

Perhaps the reason why it is called *nur* is that it serves as an agent of the enlightenment of the human being with excellent traits that the human being was fundamentally created to manifest. Considering the definition of *nur* we say that *Wudu'*, which is an action of guidance in itself, bestows the human being with inner guidance and enlightenment. Hence it really serves as *al-zahiru fi nafsihi al-muzhiru lighayrihi* (*the self-apparent one that makes others apparent*), which is the reality of *nur*. According to one opinion[47] the etymology of the word *wudu'* is *daw'* (light) and *ida'ah* (to enlighten); and that *Wudu'* is named as such because it enlightens the parts of the body and makes them effulgent. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

يَحْشَرُ اللهُ أُمَّتِيْ يَوْمَ القِيَامَةِ بَيْنَ الأُمَمِ غُرًّا مُحَجَّلِيْنَ مِنْ آثَارِ الْوُضُوْءِ

Allah will resurrect my nation among other nations in the state of being radiant and beautiful[48] due to the effects of the *Wudu'*.[49]

Imam 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Hadi ('a) is reported to have said:

لَمّا كَلَّمَ اللهُ عَزَّ وجلَّ موسَى بنَ عِمرانَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ... قَالَ: إِلَهِيْ، فَمَا جَزاءُ مَن أتَمَّ الوُضوءَ مِن خَشيَتِكَ؟ قالَ: أبعَثُهُ يَومَ القِيامَةِ ولَهُ نُورٌ بَينَ عَينَيهِ يَتَلألأُ

When Allah, the Invincible and Majestic, spoke to Musa ibn 'Imran… He said: O God, then what is the recompense of one who performs *Wudu'*

perfectly out of your fear and awe? He said: I will resurrect him on the Day of Resurrection in a state whereby he has light sparkling before his eyes.

A majority of lexicographers, however,[50] mention in their works that the word *wudu'* originates from the word *wada'ah* which means beauty (*al-husn*) and purity (*al-nazafah*), and that it is named as such because it instils beauty and purity.

Ibn Faris (d. 395/1004), the well-known lexicographer, for example, in his lexicon *Mu'jam Maqayis al-Lughah* says:

والوضوء فعلك إذا توضأت **من الوضاءة وهي الحسن والنظافة** كأن الغاسل وجهه وضأه أي حسنه

Wudu' is your action when you perform the minor religious ablution. It comes from the word *wada'ah* which means beauty and purity. It is as though the one who washes his face makes it beautiful (*wadda'ahu ay hassanahu*)…[51]

The eminent Shi'ah religious authority al-Sharif al-Murtada (d.436/1044) in his *al-Amali* when discussing the etymology of *wudu'* says:

فأما اشتقاق الوضوء فهو **من الوضاءة التي هي الحسن** فلما كان من غسل يده ونظفها قد حسنها قيل وضأها

And as for the etymology of *wudu'* it is from *wada'ah* which means beauty; and because whosoever washes his hand and cleans it makes it beautiful, it is said *'wadda'aha* (he made it beautiful)'[52]

Whether derived from *al-daw'* or *al-wada'ah*, the crux of the meaning of *Wudu'* is purity, beauty, and light.

A number of works[53] have been written about the secrets (*asrar*) of *Wudu'* and many of them have contributed enormously to the treasures of Islamic thought. The present work, however, is somewhat different. It tries to understand the secrets of *Wudu'* from some of its recommended supplications narrated by Imam 'Ali ('a). If one carefully ponders over

them, one would realise that *Wudu'* is a reminder of some of the most important stations (*mawaqif*) of the Hereafter. For those, however, who have attained a sharper vision (*al-basar al-hadidiyyah*)[54] and can pierce the veils of the material world and behold the realms of the Hereafter, it is not far-fetched to apprehend the realities of the stations of the Hereafter while they continue residing in the narrow straits of this darkest realm of divine manifestation.

The lives of the infallible progeny of the Holy Prophet (s) are replete with examples worthy of consideration. When they would stand for *Wudu'*, due to their lofty state of realisation, they would undergo great transformations, tremble in fear and be overtaken by divine awe. It is reported about Imam al-Hasan ('a) that whenever he would perform *Wudu'* his colour would change and his limbs would shake. He was [once] asked about this and he said: It behoves of one who stands before the Owner of the [Divine] Throne (*'Arsh*) to turn pale and tremble.[55] A similar case is related regarding Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a). According to a narration, whenever he would begin ablution for prayers, his face would turn pale, and fear would overcome him.[56]

The effulgent soul,[57] Sayyid Radi al-Din ibn al-Tawus (d. 664/1266) after narrating this in his excellent work *Falah al-Sa'il*, says:

فهل يجوز في ميزان العقل أن يخاف هو (عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ) وهو مستقيم، وتأمن أنت

وأنت سقيم؟ فإن كل من يريد الدخول إلى حضرة ملك لمناجاته يتأهب بإصلاح

كل ما يقع الملك عليه وبكلما يكون أقرب إليه

Does the scale of the intellect permit that he (peace be upon him) should be afraid despite being on the straight path, while you be safe and free from worries despite your state of spiritual illness? Indeed whosoever wishes to enter the presence of a king to intimately converse with him, prepares himself by reforming whatever would catch the glance of the king and whatever would be dear to him…[58]

Therefore it is imperative for us to know the secrets of every action that we perform in *Wudu'* so that we can cleanse ourselves and naturally experience

what the purified ones would experience.

In this work we have tried to draw inspiration and understand the secrets of *Wudu'* from a *hadith* narrated by a number of Shi'ah *hadith* scholars (*muhaddithun*), examples of which are Shaykh Abu Ja'far al-Barqi (d. 274/887), Shaykh Abu Ja'far al- Kulayni (d. 329/941), and Shaykh Abu Ja'far al-Saduq (d.381/991). The version we have relied on in this work[59] is the one from Shaykh Saduq in his *Thawab al-A'mal*. In this *hadith* Amir al-mu'minin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a) teaches specific supplications to his son Muhammad ibn Hanafiyyah[60] while performing *Wudu'*. It actually makes every high-spirited believer want to engage in the process of purification actively. The following is the version of Shaykh al-Saduq under the title *Thawab man tawadda'a mithla wudu' Amir al-mu'minin (s) wa qala mithla qawlihi (The reward of one who performs Wudu like the Wudu' of Amir al-mu'minin (s) and says like what He said).*

The Wudu' of Amir al-Mu'minin ('a)

Al-Shaykh al-Saduq in his *Thawab al-A'mal* narrates from Muhammad ibn al-Hasan who said: Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Saffar[61] [the author of the well-known treasure *Basa'ir al- Darajat*] narrated to me from 'Ali ibn Hassan al-Wasiti from his paternal uncle 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Kathir al-Hashimi, a companion of Muhammad ibn 'Ali [al-Baqir ('a)], from [Imam] Abu 'Abdillah [al-Sadiq ('a)] who said:

بَيْنَا أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ) ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ جَالِساً مَعَ ابْنِ الْحَنَفِيَّةِ إِذْ قَالَ: يَا مُحَمَّدُ ائْتِنِي بِإِنَاءٍ فِيهِ مَاءٌ أَتَوَضَّأُ لِلصَّلَاةِ فَأَتَاهُ مُحَمَّدٌ بِالْمَاءِ فَأَكْفَأَ

بِيَدِهِ الْيُمْنَى عَلَى يَدِهِ الْيُسْرَى

ثُمَّ قَالَ: **بِسْمِ اللهِ الْحَمْدُ للهِ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الْمَاءَ طَهُوراً وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْهُ نَجِساً**

قَالَ ثُمَّ اسْتَنْجَى فَقَالَ: **اَللَّهُمَّ حَصِّنْ فَرْجِي وَأَعِفَّهُ وَاسْتُرْ عَوْرَتِيْ وَحَرِّمْنِي عَلَى النَّارِ**

ثُمَّ تَمَضْمَضَ فَقَالَ: **اَللَّهُمَّ لَقِّنِّي حُجَّتِي يَوْمَ أَلْقَاكَ وَأَطْلِقْ لِسَانِيْ بِذِكْرِكَ**

ثُمَّ اسْتَنْشَقَ فَقَالَ: **اَللَّهُمَّ لَا تُحَرِّمْ عَلَيَّ رِيحَ الْجَنَّةِ وَاجْعَلْنِيْ مِمَّنْ يَشَمُّ رِيحَهَا وَرَوْحَهَا وَرَيْحَانَهَا وَطِيبَهَا**

قَالَ ثُمَّ غَسَلَ وَجْهَهُ فَقَالَ: **اَللَّهُمَّ بَيِّضْ وَجْهِي يَوْمَ تَسْوَدُّ فِيهِ الْوُجُوهُ وَلَا تُسَوِّدْ وَجْهِي يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ فِيهِ الْوُجُوهُ**

ثُمَّ غَسَلَ يَدَهُ الْيُمْنَى فَقَالَ: **اَللَّهُمَّ أَعْطِنِي كِتَابِي بِيَمِيْنِيْ وَالْخُلْدَ فِي الْجِنَانِ بِيَسَارِيْ وَحَاسِبْنِيْ حِسَاباً يَسِيراً**

ثُمَّ غَسَلَ يَدَهُ الْيُسْرَى فَقَالَ: **اَللَّهُمَّ لَا تُعْطِنِيْ كِتَابِيْ بِشِمَالِيْ وَلَا تَجْعَلْهَا مَغْلُولَةً إِلَى عُنُقِيْ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ مُقَطَّعَاتِ النِّيرَانِ**

ثُمَّ مَسَحَ رَأْسَهُ فَقَالَ: **اَللَّهُمَّ غَشِّنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ وَبَرَكَاتِكَ وَعَفْوِكَ**

قَالَ ثُمَّ مَسَحَ رِجْلَيْهِ فَقَالَ: **اَللَّهُمَّ ثَبِّتْنِي عَلَى الصِّرَاطِ يَوْمَ تَزِلُّ فِيهِ الْأَقْدَامُ وَاجْعَلْ سَعْيِيْ فِيمَا يُرْضِيْكَ عَنِّي يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ**

ثُمَّ رَفَعَ رَأْسَهُ فَنَظَرَ إِلَى مُحَمَّدٍ فَقَالَ: يَا مُحَمَّدُ مَنْ تَوَضَّأَ مِثْلَ وُضُوئِي وَقَالَ مِثْلَ قَوْلِي خَلَقَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مِنْ كُلِّ قَطْرَةٍ مَلَكاً يُقَدِّسُهُ وَيُسَبِّحُهُ وَيُكَبِّرُهُ وَيَكْتُبُ اللهُ تَعَالَى لَهُ ثَوَابَ ذَلِكَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ

One day Amir al-mu'minin ['Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a)] was sitting with his son Muhammad ibn Hanafiyyah, when he said: O Muhammad bring me a vessel of water, so that I perform *Wudu'* for prayer. So his son Muhammad brought him water, and the Imam ('a) took some water by his right palm and placed it on his left, and thereafter said: *I begin with Allah's name, praise belongs to Allah who made water a purifying agent, and did not make it impure.*

Then he ('a) cleaned himself from impurities (*istanja*), and prayed: *O Allah, protect my shame and make me chaste, and cover my private organs and forbid me upon the Hell-Fire.*

Then the Imam ('a) gargled (*tamadmada*) and prayed: *Inculcate in me my clear proof the Day I shall meet You, and open my tongue with Your remembrance.*

Then the Imam ('a) inhaled water through the nose (*istanshaqa*), and prayed: *O Allah, forbid on me not the fragrance of the Garden of Heaven, and make me among those who smell its fragrance, its scent, its perfume and its pleasant smell.*

Then he washed his face and prayed: *O Allah, brighten my face on the Day when [some] faces are dark, and do not darken my face on the Day when [some] faces are bright.*

Then he ('a) washed his right hand, and prayed: *O Allah, give me my book [of deeds] in my right hand, and a permanent stay in the abodes of Heaven without difficulty, and account me [for my deeds] with an easy accounting.*

Then he ('a) washed his left hand and prayed: *O Allah do not give to me my book of deeds in my left hand nor chain it to my neck, and I seek refuge in You from the clothes of the Hell-Fire.*

Then he (‘a) wiped over his head, and prayed: *O Allah, cover me with Your mercy, Your abundant bounties and Your forgiveness.*

Then he (‘a) wiped over his two feet and prayed: *O Allah make my two feet firm on the path, the Day when feet will slip, and render my struggle in that which makes You pleased with me, O Most Merciful of the merciful ones.*

Then the Imam (‘a) raised his head and looked at Muhammad [ibn Hanafiyyah] and said: O Muhammad, whosoever performs *Wudu’* the way I [just] performed it, and says what I [just] said, Allah will create from every drop [of the water used or dropped], an angel that will sanctify, glorify and magnify Him, whereupon Allah will record for him the reward of that until the Judgement Day.

Commenting on this radiant tradition[62] in his *Asrar al-Salat*, the contemporary exegete of the Qur’an, Ayatullah ‘Abdullah Jawadi Amuli (b. 1933), says that not just any kind of *Wudu’* coupled with any kind of supplication would result in the aforementioned powerful effects; rather, the *Wudu’* must be performed in the same manner as Imam ‘Ali (‘a) performed it. The intention, state, and presence of heart are all important elements that can reap such great results.[63]

One of the fundamental sources of our research has been the work *al-Arba‘in* of al-Shaykh Baha’ al-Din Muhammad ibn Husayn al-‘Amili (d. 1031/1622), a powerful scholar of the Shi‘ah world. He has tackled the *Wudu’* of Amir al-mu’minin (‘a) in detail while discussing the fifth tradition of his work.[64]

Other invaluable sources of our research which have also covered the secrets of *Wudu’* are: *Asrar al-Shari‘ah* of Sayyid Haydar Amuli (d. 787/1385), the *Asrar al-Salat* of al-Shahid al-Thani (d. 1011/1602), the *Nibras al-Huda* and *Asrar al-Hikam* of Mulla Hadi Sabzawari (d. 1289/1873), the *Asrar al-Salat* of Mirza Maliki Tabrizi (d. 1343/1924) and the *Asrar al-Salat* of Ayatullah Shaykh ‘Abdullah Jawadi Amuli (b. 1933).

We pray to Allah to enable us to perform *Wudu’* as He desires, and to bestow us with the succour of always remaining in the state of purity.

In the end I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all those who helped me in completing this project. My special thanks to Shaykh ‘Abbas Mulla Asgharali Jaffer who read through parts of the work and gave invaluable suggestions.

CHAPTER 1

Wudu' in the Holy Qur'an

CHAPTER 1

Wudu'[65] in the Holy Qur'an

The Holy Qur'an, describing the method of *Wudu'*, says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلاةِ فاغْسِلُواْ وُجُوهَكُمْ
وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُواْ بِرُؤُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى
الْكَعْبَينِ...

O you who believe![66] When you stand up for prayer, then wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows, and wipe a part of your heads and your feet, up to the ankles…(5:6)

To establish the authenticity of the method of our *Wudu'*, it is important for us to briefly consider the above verse. Due to conflicting opinions about the verse, our duty is to refer to the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) who, according to the Holy Prophet (s), are the peers of the Qur'an[67] and most knowledgeable in all its intricacies.[68]

The authorities of Islamic law, in light of the Qur'an, enumerate the *fundamental parts* of *Wudu'* as follows:

1. Intention (*al-niyyah*):

This is not a kind of vocalisation. Obeying the command, '*O you who have faith, when you stand up for prayer, then wash…*' reveals that one already has an intention. Hence the moment one intends to perform *Wudu'* to attain the proximity of Allah, *niyyah* is actualised; the oration of this is unnecessary, but nevertheless not prohibited.

2. Washing of the face (*ghasl al-wajh*):

This act is derived from the phrase فَاغْسِلُوْا وُجُوْهَكُمْ *faghsilu wujuha-kum* (then wash your faces) of the aforementioned verse (5:6) of the Qur'an.

3. Washing of the two hands (*ghasl al-yadayn*):

This act is derived from the second object اَيْدِيَكُمْ *aydiya-kum* (your hands) of the imperative verb in the phrase فَاغْسِلُوْا *faghsilu* (then wash) of the aforementioned verse (5:6). The verse says: '…then wash your faces *and your hands*…' Here the phrase إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ *ila al-marafiq* (up to the elbows) does not imply that one has to start washing from the palms and end with the elbows as some Muslims have wrongly interpreted. The preposition إِلَى ila (*until*) is grammatically linked to *aydiya-kum* (your hands) and not *faghsilu* (then wash) and thus employed to expound the limit of washing of the hand, and not the place where the washing must end. And this is clearly apparent for anyone who understands Arabic grammar well. Hence those who try to grammatically link the preposition *ila* to the phrase *faghsilu* have overlooked the apparent order of the sentence.

4. Wiping a part of the head (*mash ba'd al-ra's*):

This act is derived from the phrase وَامْسَحُوا بِرُؤُوسِكُمْ *wamsahu bi-ru'usi-kum* (and wipe a part of your heads) of the aforementioned verse. The preposition *bi* in بِرُؤُوسِكُمْ *bi-ru'usi-kum* signifies partitioning (*al-tab'id*) or 'to consider only a part of something'. And the phrase *ru'usi-kum* (lit. your heads) is the first object (*maf'ul*) of the imperative verb اِمْسَحُوْا *imsahu* (wipe). The reason why the apparent diacritical marks in the verse are in the genitive case (*majrur*) and not the accusative (*mansub*), is due to the preposition *ba* prefixed to it, which renders it to be in the genitive case. Therefore the meaning of '*wamsahu bi-ru'usi- kum*' is 'and wipe *a part of your heads…'*

5. Wiping the two feet (*mash al-rijlayn*):

This act is derived from the second object أَرْجُلَكُمْ *arjula-kum* (your legs) of the imperative verb إِمْسَحُوْا *imsahu* (wipe) in the phrase وَامْسَحُواْ... أَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَينِ *wamsahu… arjula-kum ila al-ka'bayn* (and wipe… your feet, up to the ankles) of the aforementioned verse.

The preposition إِلَى *ila* (until) in the phrase *ila al-ka'bayn* (until the ankles), as in the previous case, defines the *limit* of wiping the feet and not its order. In simpler words, we are told that we should wipe our feet, and that the length of wiping is up to the ankles.

Some Muslims instead of wiping their feet, wash them,[69] because they say that the phrase *arjula-kum* (your feet) is in the accusative case (*al-mansub*) and thus cannot be reckoned as a continuation of *ru'usi-kum* (your heads) which is in the genitive case (*al-majrur*). Therefore it must be a continuity of *aydiya-kum* (your hands) which is in the accusative case and whose verb is *ighsilu* (wash). In short, they say that Allah is commanding us '…then wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows…and [wash] your feet up to the ankles'. Scholars of authority deem such kinds of expression as being against the eloquence of the Arabic of the Qur'an. They say that separating the Qur'anic phrase *wa arjulakum and faghsilu wujuhakum wa aydiyakum* with the Qur'anic phrase *imsahu bi-ru'usi-kum*, is to separate two connected phrases (*al-muta'atifayn*) with a performative statement, and this is something that is far- fetched.

In this regard, Shaykh Ibrahim al-Halabi (d. 956 AH) says:

والصحيح أنّ الأرجل معطوفة على الرؤوس في القراءتين، ونصبها على المحل، وجرّها على اللفظ، وذلك لامتناع العطف على وجوهكم، للفصل بين المعطوف والمعطوف عليه بجملة أجنبية، هي **(وَامْسَحُوْا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ)** والأصل أن لا يفصل بينهما بمفرد، فضلاً عن الجملة، ولم يسمع في الفصيح نحو «ضربت زيداً ومررت ببكر وعمراً» بعطف «عمراً» على «زيداً»

The correct understanding is that *al-arjul* is joined to *al-ru'us* in both recitations [that which considers *arjula-kum* to be accusative and that which considers *arjuli-kum* to be genitive]. It is accusative (*al-mansub*) in terms of its grammatical place (*al-mahall*), and genitive (*al-majrur*) in terms of following the literal diacritical marks of the phrase it is connected to, for it [*al-arjul*] cannot be joined to *wujuha-kum*, because that would be to separate two connected phrases with a foreign phrase that is *wamsahu bi-ru'usi-kum*. Fundamentally, such a connection cannot be separated with a single word, leave alone a sentence, and in eloquent speech of Arabic it is unheard of for one to say, for example, 'I beat Zayd and I passed by Bakr, and (also beat) 'Amr,' connecting the word 'Amr to the word Zayd.[70]

Therefore, the reason for *arjula-kum* to be in the accusative case, is because although *ru'usi-kum* is in the genitive case, its actual grammatical state is accusative, because it represents the second object of the verb *imsahu*, which renders it accusative.

In fact we have clear indications narrated from Sunni sources that reveal that *Wudu'* during the time of the Holy Prophet (s) contained two actions of washing and two actions of wiping. Consider the following narrations:

1. Ibn Kathir in his *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, says: 'Amr ibn Dinar narrates from 'Akrimah who narrates from Ibn 'Abbas who said:

اَلْوُضُوْءُ غَسْلَتَانِ وَمَسْحَتَانِ

Wudu' consists of two washings and two wipings.[71]

This narration has also been mentioned by al-Suyuti in his exegesis of the Qur'an called *al-Durr al-Manthur*.[72]

2. Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti in his *al-Durr al-Manthur fi Tafsir al- Ma'thur* narrates from 'Abd al-Razzaq and 'Abd al-Hamid who narrate the following from Ibn 'Abbas:

اِفْتَرَضَ اللهُ غَسْلَتَيْنِ وَمَسْحَتَيْنِ

Allah made two washings and two wipings obligatory.[73]

3. In the same work, al-Suyuti narrates from Ibn Jurayr who narrates the following from al-Shu‘bi:

نَزَلَ جِبْرِيْلُ بِالْمَسْحِ عَلَى الْقَدَمَيْنِ

Gabriel came down with [the ruling of] wiping over the two feet.[74]

4. And in another narration Ibn al-A‘mash and al-Nuhas narrate the following from al-Shu‘bi:

نَزَلَ الْقُرْآنُ بِالْمَسْحِ وَجَرَتِ السُّنَّةُ بِالْغَسْلِ

The Holy Qur’an came down with [the ruling of] wiping, but the Tradition (Sunnah) took the course of washing [of the feet].

Analysing this statement is beyond the scope of this limited work. However, in light of the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) who are the authorities of religious law, anything that contradicts the Book of Allah must be negated. Besides, the authentic Prophetic Sunnah never went against the Book of Allah, but rather elucidated it and made it clear. Hence the Sunnah that al-Shu‘bi speaks about in the above tradition is *Sunnatu ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan* (the Sunnah of ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan), for historic evidence shows that the new *Wudu’* that contradicted the common *Wudu’* of the Holy Prophet (s) and his companions, began during a part of the reign of Ibn ‘Affan, who innovated it in the beginning and invited others to follow thereafter. Unfortunately all the four schools of Sunni Islam embraced it and left the *Wudu’* of the Holy Prophet (s) that even Abu Bakr and ‘Umar are reported to have accepted during their time.

Whatever we have so far mentioned are only the obligatory parts of *Wudu’*, the details of which scholars of Islamic law have explained in their works after referring to the Sunnah of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). Our purpose here was only to enumerate the fundamental parts of the *Wudu’* in light of the Qur’an. We have also skipped the recommended and supererogatory acts of this important devotion for the sake of brevity. Those who desire to know about these details can refer to the ample works of Islamic law written by scholars of Islamic jurisprudence, examples of which are the *Minhaj al-*

Salihin of Ayatullah Sayyid Abu al-Qasim al-Khu'i (d. 1413/1992) and the *Tahrir al-Wasilah* of Imam Ruhullah al-Khumayni (d. 1410/1989).

CHAPTER 2

Appreciating the Secrets of Wudu'

On Intention

CHAPTER 2

On Intention (*al-Niyyah*)

Niyyah is the spirit of every action. The stronger the *niyyah*, the better the action. Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) is reported to have taught the following ontological principle:

مَا ضَعُفَ بَدَنٌ عَمَّا قَوِيَتْ عَلَيْهِ النِّيَّةُ

A body does not become weak *in that for which the intention is strong*.[75]

Intending to do *Wudu*, which is a means of acquiring inner beauty and light, must be motivated by a strong and fervent aspiration and determination in an individual to turn beautiful and radiant. If one is determined for such a change, one would strictly observe its etiquette and take every action seriously. In the beautiful words of the Qur’an, there are a people who *constantly love* and do not simply *intend* to purify themselves: ‘…Therein are men *who constantly love* to purify themselves (*fihi rijalun yuhibbuna an yatatahharu*)…’ (9:108). If there is love for self-purification, then the act of self-purification will appear in a better form.

Ayatullah Husayn al-Mazahiri (b. 1934) in one of his speeches where he mentions the importance of being constantly in the state of *Wudu’*, is reported to have said:

شخصي نقل می کرد شبي در خدمت يکی از بزرگان و علما بودم. او مريض
شده بود. ولی هشت مرتبه برای تطهير رفت و در حاليکه هوا بسيار سرد بود.
پس از تطهير با آب سرد وضو می گرفت و بدون وضو نخوابيد.

A person once narrated that one night I was in the presence of one of the great scholars. He had turned ill. However he went to purify himself eight times while the weather was extremely cold. After washing himself, he would do *Wudu'* with cold water and did not sleep without *Wudu'*...[76]

This incident reveals a firm determination on the part of the said eminent scholar to always be armed with the shield of purity, which is a protection against the Satan, the sworn enemy of human beings.

Therefore, the phenomenon of *niyyah* is not simply a state of mind, but a driving force that results in action. And such a force is a natural outcome of one's character and disposition.

The Holy Qur'an says:

قُلْ كُلٌّ **يَعْمَلُ عَلَى شَاكِلَتِهِ** فَرَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ هُوَ أَهْدَى سَبِيْلاً

Say, 'Everyone acts according to his character. Your Lord knows best who is better guided with regard to the way.' (17:84)

Commenting on this verse, Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have defined '*ala shakilati-hi* (according to his character) as '*ala niyyatihi* (according to his intention).[77]

The Concept of Isbagh al-Wudu'

If one truly intends to transform one's heart and beautify it, one must perform what is known in the holy narrations of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) as *isbagh al-wudu'* (the perfecting of *Wudu'*). The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said to his close companion Abu Dharr:

يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ **إِسْبَاغُ الْوُضُوْءِ** عَلَى الْمَكَارِهِ مِنَ الْكَفَّارَاتِ

O Abu Dharr, perfecting ablution *(isbagh al-Wudu'*) during difficulties is from those things that expiate sins.[78]

The Holy Prophet (s) is again reported to have said:

بُنِيَت الصَّلاَةُ عَلَى أَرْبَعَةِ أَسْهُمٍ: سَهْمُ **إِسْبَاغِ الْوُضُوْءِ**، وَسَهْمٌ لِلرُّكُوْعِ، وَسَهْمٌ لِلسُّجُوْدِ، وَسَهْمٌ لِلْخُشُوْعِ

Prayer is built on four parts: a part for the perfecting of *Wudu'* (*isbagh al-Wudu'*), a part for bending down in prayer, a part for prostration, and a part for humility.[79]

The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said to Anas:

يَا اَنَسُ **أَسْبِغِ الْوُضُوءَ** تَمُرُّ عَلَى الصِّرَاطِ مَرَّ السَّحَابِ

O Anas, perform *Wudu'* perfectly (*asbigh al-Wudu'*) and you will pass over the [straight] path the way the cloud passes.[80]

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir ('a) is reported to have said:

ثَلاَثٌ كَفَّارَاتٌ: **إِسْبَاغُ الْوُضُوءِ** بِالسَّبَرَاتِ، وَالْمَشْيُ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ إِلَى الصَّلاَةِ، وَالْمُحَافَظَةُ عَلَى الْجَمَاعَاتِ

Three things expiate sins: performing *Wudu'* perfectly (*isbagh al-Wudu'*) during extreme cold, walking towards prayer during the day and the night, and adhering to congregational prayers.[81]

Explaining the literal meaning of the trilateral root *sin-ba'-ghayn*, of *al-isbagh*, Ibn Faris in his etymological lexicon *Mu'jam Maqayis al-Lughah* says:

أصل واحد يدلّ على تمام الشيء وكماله، يقال: أَسْبَغْتُ الأَمْرَ، وأَسْبَغَ فُلاَنٌ وُضُوْءَهُ

It is a single origin that signifies the completeness and perfection of a thing. It is said: '*asbaghtu al-amr* (I did the thing perfectly)' and '*asbagha fulan Wudu'ahu* (So and so performed his ablution perfectly)…'[82]

Describing the legislative connotation of the term *isbagh al-Wudu'*, 'Allamah Majlisi (d. 1110/1698) in his *Bihar al-Anwar* says:

إسباغ الوضوء كماله والسعي في إيصال الماء إلى أجزاء الأعضاء ورعاية الآداب والمستحبات فيه من الأدعية وغيرها

Isbagh al-Wudu' is its perfection, struggling to make water reach the parts of the limbs, observing its etiquettes and supererogatory acts like supplications, etc…[83]

The Scale of Sincerity

The most fundamental element of intention is sincerity (*ikhlas*), which actually determines the quality of the action. If our ablutions bear sincere intentions (*al-niyyat al-khalisah*) they will shine with the brilliance of monotheism and really instil light and beauty. If our sole object is to attain the proximity of Allah, we will truly benefit from the ample benefits of *Wudu'*. But if our intentions are mixed with the slightest form of self-interest, ostentation, etc. they will have little or no desired effect. This also applies to every other act of worship. We must try to unite with the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيايَ وَمَماتِي لِلّهِ رَبِّ الْعالَمِينَ

Say, surely my prayer and my devotion and my life and my death are (all) for Allah, the Lord of the worlds. (6:162)

Shaykh 'Ali Muhiti in his *Sirat-e Suluk*, quotes his mentor Ayatullah Hasan Zadeh Amuli as follows:

روزی در محفل درس حضرت استاد (دام عزه) که از خرمن فضلشان بهره‌مند می‌شدیم، فرمودند: «اساتید ما می‌فرمودند: در طهارت دقت داشته باشید، قدمی عاشقانه بردارید و صادقانه بیایید تا اینها را بچشید، چند بار که شکار کنید به فهم اینها کمک می‌کند، یک جهش علمی پدید می‌آید و انسان می‌شود مصداق «إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَ نُسُكِي وَ مَحْيَايَ وَ مَمَاتِي لِلهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ» وقف خالص الهی می‌شود به سود و گداز می‌آید و افاضات و اشاراقات نصیبش می‌شود».

One day in the class of Hadrat Ustad (perpetual is his esteem), from whom we would benefit, he [Ayatullah Hasan Zadeh Amuli] said: Our teachers would say: During purification be careful and take an amorously loving step and approach [it] truthfully so that you can experience its flavour; if you do that a number of times, it would assist you in understanding it, and a leap of knowledge would come about and the human being would transform to an example of '*Say, surely my prayer and my devotion and my life and my death are (all) for Allah, the Lord of the worlds*' (6:162). He would sincerely be at the service of God, turn [spiritually] ablaze, and be availed with divine effusions and illuminations.[84]

If our intentions are pure in all our actions we will enjoy what many are deprived of. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

مَنْ أَخْلَصَ لِلهِ أَرْبَعِيْنَ يَوْمًا فَجَّرَ اللهُ يَنَابِيْعَ الْحِكْمَةَ مِنْ قَلْبِهِ عَلَى لِسَانِهِ

Whosoever is wholly devoted to Allah for forty days, Allah would make well-springs of wisdom gush forth from his heart to his tongue.[85]

Bearing and securing a sincere intention (*al-niyyah al-khalisah*) however, is not all that easy, for it entails great struggle against the evil-inviting self and its inclinations.

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said:

وَصَاحِبُ **النِّيَّةِ الْخَالِصَةِ** نَفْسُهُ وَهَوَاهُ مَعَهُ مَقْهُوْرَانِ تَحْتَ سُلْطَانِ تَعْظِيْمِ اللهِ وَالْحَيَاءِ مِنْهُ

And *one who possesses a pure intention*, his ego and desire are dominated under the sovereignty of venerating Allah and observing shyness before Him.[86]

Mulla Sadra (d. 1050/1640) in his *al-Mabda' wa al-Ma'ad* mentions different groups of worshippers. At one place he says:

وليعلم أن **النية الخالصة عن شوب الأغراض النفسانية** مطلقا لا يمكن أن تيسر إلا للطائفة الأخيرة أي الحكماء

And it must be known *that intention that is absolutely purified from the taint of the desires of the self,* cannot be easily possible except for the ultimate group: the men of wisdom.[87]

Mulla Muhammad Salih al-Mazandarani (d. 1080/1669-70) in his *Sharh Usul al-Kafi* says:

إنّ النية الخالصة يتوقف على قلع القلب عن حب الدنيا ونزعه عن الميل إلى ما سوى الله تعالى، وهذا أشق أشياء على النفس...

…*Indeed a pure intention* is subject to uprooting the heart from the love of the world and detaching it from being inclined to other than Allah, and this is the most difficult thing on the soul…[88]

Shaykh al-Najafi al-Isfahani (d. 1332) in his *Isharat Imaniyyah* while explaining the prophetic tradition 'The intention of a believer is better than his action and the intention of a disbeliever is more evil than his action, and every doer acts according to his intention', mentions nine variable interpretations, the seventh of which is as follows:

السابع: أنّ النية الخالصة أصعب الأعمال وأحمزها والعمل أسهل منها

Seven: Indeed a pure intention is the most difficult and bitter of actions, while its performance is easier.[89]

Kinds of Intention

Authoritative scholars have tackled an important narration with regard to the sincerity of one's intention in any kind of worship: Amir al-mu'minin ('a) is reported to have said:

إِنَّ قَوْمًا عَبَدُوا اللهَ رَغْبَةً فَتِلْكَ عِبَادَةُ التُّجَّارِ، وَإِنَّ قَوْمًا عَبَدُوا اللهَ رَهْبَةً فَتِلْكَ عِبَادَةُ الْعَبِيْدِ، وَإِنَّ قَوْمًا عَبَدُوْا اللهَ شُكْرًا فَتِلْكَ عِبَادَةُ الْأَحْرَارِ وَهِيَ أَفْضَلُ الْعِبَادَةِ

Indeed a people worship Allah to acquire something, and that is the worship of merchants; and indeed a people worship Allah out of fear, and that is the worship of slaves; and indeed a people worship Allah out of a feeling of thankfulness, and that is the worship of free men, and it is the best kind of worship.[90]

Hence there are three kinds of worshippers:

a) Those who worship Allah seeking divine reward

b) Those who worship Allah in fear of Hell-Fire

c) Those who worship Allah because He is worthy of worship

If carefully understood, one will realise that the abovementioned tradition does not say that the first two kinds of worship are not reckoned as correct worship but rather that the third kind is superior and better (*afdal*) than the first two. Hence, although the first two kinds of worship are acceptable levels of worship, the third is the highest in degree of excellence and the most meritorious.

The esteemed Shaykh Baha'i (d. 1031/1622) has tackled this important *hadith* in some of his authoritative works. In the thirty-seventh *hadith* of his work *al-Arba'in*, for example, while discussing a tradition[91] that determines

the best of actions (*afdal al-a'mal*), he opens a discourse and asks whether the motives of seeking divine reward and protection from divine punishment can invalidate one's action or not, and concludes that although such motives do not invalidate one's worship, they are nowhere near the third kind of worship which is by far the best. He ratifies his opinion by quoting a *hadith* from Imam al-Sadiq ('a) similar to the aforementioned *hadith* of Amir al-mu'minin ('a). He says:

والأولى أن يستدل على ذلك المطلب بما رواه الشيخ الجليل محمد بن يعقوب في الكافي بطريق حسن عن هارون بن خارجة عن الإمام أبي عبد الله جعفر بن محمد الصادق (عليه السلام) قال: اَلْعُبَّادُ ثَلاَثَةٌ: قَوْمٌ عَبَدُوا اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ خَوْفًا فَتِلْكَ عِبَادَةُ الْعَبِيْدِ، وَقَوْمٌ عَبَدُوا اللهَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى طَلَبَ الثَّوَابِ فَتِلْكَ عِبَادَةُ الْأُجَرَاءِ، وَقَوْمٌ عَبَدُوا اللهَ عَزَ وَجَلَّ حُبًّا لَهُ فَتِلْكَ عِبَادَةُ الْأَحْرَارِ، وَهِيَ أَفْضَلُ الْعِبَادَةِ.

فإن قوله عليه السلام "وهي أفضل العبادة" يعطي أن العبادة على الوجهين السابقين لا يخلو من فضل أيضا فتكون صحيحة وهو المطلوب

It is more appropriate to prove the matter [of the validity of the first two kinds of worship] with what the majestic Shaykh Muhammad ibn Ya'qub narrated in *al-Kafi*[92] with a sound chain of narration from Harun ibn Kharijah from Imam Abu 'Abdillah Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq ('a), who said: Servants of Allah are three [kinds]: a people who worship Allah, the Invincible and Majestic, out of fear, and that is the worship of bondsmen; and a people who worship Allah, the Abundantly-Gracious and Sublime, seeking reward, and that is the worship of hired staff; and a people who worship Allah, the Invincible and Majestic, out of love for Him, and that is the worship of free men, and it is the best worship.

Indeed the Imam's expression 'and it is the best worship' conveys that the former two kinds of worship are not devoid of merit, and thus they are valid, and to prove this was our objective. [93]

Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d. 606/1209) in his Qur'anic exegesis *Mafatih al-Ghayb* has a different opinion. He says that the first two kinds of worship are invalid, and 'if a person says I am performing my prayers to seek divine reward or to flee from His punishment, his prayer turns void (*law qala usalli lithawab Allah aw lil harbi min 'iqabihi fasudat salatuhu*).'[94] However, he also mentions the opinion of those who accept the validity of these actions with a reasoning different from the aforementioned opinion of Shaykh Baha'i. He says that those who believe that intending the acquisition of divine reward and protection from divine punishment does not invalidate worship, do not regard that the action loses its purity; furthermore, they opine that intending the acquisition of divine reward and protection from His wrath does not contradict the intention of seeking Allah, for indeed Allah, the Exalted, while praising His chosen ones, says that they would hurry to do good actions and would call on Him 'desirously and fearfully (*raghaban wa rahaban*)',[95] i.e. in desire of reward and fear of punishment.

As a rebuttal to this, Shaykh Baha'i says in his *al-Arba'in*:

أما قولهم إن تلك الإرادة ليست مخالفة لإرادة وجه الله سبحانه فكلام ظاهري قشري إذ البون البعيد بين إطاعة المحبوب والإنقياد إليه لمحض حبه وتحصيل رضاه وبين إطاعته لأغراض اخر أظهر من الشمس في رابعة النهار، والثانية ساقطة بالكلية عن درجة الإعتبار عند أولي الأبصار.

As for their statement '*Indeed that intention* [i.e. intention of worship for seeking divine reward or protection from divine punishment] *does not contradict intending God, the Exalted*': it is a superficial and meaningless statement, for there is an immense gap between obeying the Beloved and submitting to Him solely due to love for Him and seeking His pleasure, and obeying Him for other motives which are as apparent as daylight. The latter has no value at all according to the insightful.[96]

In his philosophical epistle *Risalat al-Wilayah*, alluding to the fact that the former two kinds of worship are very inferior, 'Allamah Tabataba'i (d. 1402/1981) says:

وغير القسم الثالث، حيث انّ غايته الفوز بالراحة، أو التخلص من العذاب، فغايته حصول مشتهى النفس. فالتوجه فيه إلى الله سبحانه انما هو لحصول مشتهى النفس؛ ففيه جعل الحق سبحانه واسطة لحصول المشتهى. والواسطة، من حيث هي واسطة، غير مقصودة إلاّ بالتبع والعرض؛ فهي بالحقيقة ليست إلاّ عبادة للشهوة

The aims of the first and second kinds of devotion is comfort or immunity from chastisement and therefore their purpose is fulfilling the desires of the self (*nafs*). Hence, attention to Allah [and worshipping Him] in them is only for the sake of achieving the desires of the self, and thereby placing Allah, the Glorified, as a means to attain the said desires. Hence, the means inasmuch as it is the means is not intended, except secondarily and accidentally. In reality such kind of worship is only worship for the sake of desires.[97]

Hence we must always opt to soar to the Beloved through the best kind of worship, which is a gradual process. Worshipping Allah solely to attain His proximity and pleasure is achieved gradually through intuitive recognition (*al-ma'rifah al-shuhudiyyah*). Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said:

اَلنِّيَّةُ تَبْدُو مِنَ الْقَلْبِ عَلَى قَدْرِ صَفَاءِ الْمَعْرِفَةِ

The intention begins from the heart; and [its quality] is to the extent of the clarity of recognition.[98]

Amir al-mu'minin ('a) is also reported to have said:

ثَمَرَةُ الْعِلْمِ إِخْلاَصُ الْعَمَلِ

The fruit of knowledge is the purification of action.[99]

Maintaining One's Sincerity

A very significant point with regard to intention is *maintaining one's sincere intention*. Sometimes one finds that one begins with an intention free from the specks of polytheism, but during one's worship one is overcome by insinuations either directly from Satan or from one's evil-inviting self (*al-nafs al-ammarah*), and thus he tarnishes his intention.

Therefore we must be vigilant and struggle to maintain our *niyyah* so that it may bear the fruits of perfection. Underlining the challenge of maintaining sincerity of action, Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said:

اَلاِبْقَاءُ عَلَى الْعَمَلِ حَتّى يَخْلُصَ أَشَدّ مِنَ الْعَمَلِ

Perseverance upon an action until it becomes sincere [for Allah] is more difficult than the action itself.[100]

Phases of Intention in Worship

Scholars of ethics enumerate different levels of patience in their sequence of intensity. One of the higher levels of patience they mention is patience in obedience to Allah (*al-sabr 'ala ta'at Allah*). This kind of patience in acts of worship has three important phases all of which are related to one's intention:

a) Before worship, when trying to make a sincere intention (*ikhlas*)

b) During worship, when maintaining the intention solely for Allah, and not faltering into ostentation (*riya'*)

c) After worship, when controlling oneself from self-conceit (*'ujb*)

All the above mentioned phases require patience and the worshipper must be alert, for Satan is always trying to deviate the human being who yearns to seek the proximity of Allah.

Ayatullah Shaykh 'Abdullah al-Mamaqani (d. 1351/1932) in his *Mir'at al-Rashad* advises his son:

واعلم بُنَيّ أنّ الصبر على الطاعة لازم قبل العمل وحالَه وبعدَه: أمّا قبله فلتصحيح النيّة؛ وأمّا حالَه فلِكي لا يغفل عن ذكر الله تعالى، ولا يستعمل الرياء؛ وأمّا بعده فلكي لا يستعمل العُجْب ونحوه ممّا يُفسده

Know, my dear son, that patience in obedience is essential before, during and after the action. As for patience before action, it is due to the correction of one's intention; as for patience during action, it is so that one is not oblivious of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, and does not practice ostentation (*riya'*); and as for patience after the action, it is so that one is not overcome with self-conceit (*'ujb*) and the like that would corrupt the action.[101]

An Allusion Worthy of Consideration

Having realised that the literal meaning and fundamental purpose of *Wudu'* is *al-wada'ah* (purity), one who is not careful in the spirit of the action of *Wudu'* and does not have a pure and clean intention, will not reap the anticipated purity (*wada'ah*). Therefore we must be extra careful in this important segment of *Wudu'* and struggle to purify our intentions, so that our *Wudu'* really serves as a purifying agent that enlightens our souls and transports us to the neighbourhood of the Only Beloved.

CHAPTER 3

Appreciating the Secrets of Wudu'

On Washing the Face

CHAPTER 3

On Washing the Face (*Ghasl al-Wajh*)

In the aforementioned meaningful tradition of Amir al- mu'minin ('a), he teaches his son Muhammad ibn Hanafiyyah that when one washes the face in *Wudu'*, one should recite the following supplication:

اَللّهُمَّ بَيِّضْ وَجْهِيْ، يَوْمَ تَسْوَدّ فِيْهِ الْوُجُوْهُ، وَلاَ تُسَوِّدْ وَجْهِيْ، يَوْمَ تَبْيَضّ فِيْهِ الْوُجُوْهُ

O Allah, brighten my face on the Day when some faces are dark, and do not darken my face on the Day when some faces are bright.[102]

In order to understand this supplication better and apply its practical implications, we must try to understand some of its vocabulary first.

The Meaning of Wajh

The Holy Qur'an says:

يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوهٌ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوهٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ اسْوَدَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ أَكْفَرْتُم بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ فَذُوقُواْ الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ. وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ابْيَضَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ فَفِي رَحْمَةِ اللهِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

On the day when [some] faces will turn bright and [some] faces will turn dark. As for those whose faces turn dark [it will be said to them], 'Did you disbelieve after your faith? So taste the punishment because of what you used to disbelieve.' But as for those whose faces become bright, they shall dwell in God's mercy, and they will remain in it forever. (3:106-107)

The word *wajh* which we conventionally render as 'face'[103] lexically means *ma yutawajjahu bi-hi*[104] (that by which one pays attention). Therefore we should not limit its extensions (*masadiq*) to the conventional physical faces that we know. Its conceptual umbrella embraces the higher realms too, and includes the hearts, which see[105] Allah on the Resurrection Day. Some scholars like Muhyi al-Din Ibn al-'Arabi (d. 543/1148) translate *wajh* as the essence (*dhat*) of an entity. In his magnum opus *al-Futuhat al-Makkiyyah*, when discussing the secrets of washing the face in *Wudu'*, he says:

ووجه الإنسان، وكل شيء، حقيقته وذاته وعينه. يقال: وجه الشيء، ووجه المسالة، ووجه الحكم،- ويريد بهذا الوجه: حقيقة المسمى، وعينه، وذاته. قال تعالى: وُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ ناضِرَةٌ إِلى رَبِّها ناظِرَةٌ. وَوُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ باسِرَةٌ. تَظُنُّ أَنْ يُفْعَلَ بِها فاقِرَةٌ.- والوجوه التي هي في مقدم الإنسان، ليست توصف بالظنون وإنما الظن لحقيقة الإنسان

…And the face (*wajh*) of the human being and of every [other] thing, is its reality (*haqiqah*), essence (*dhat*) and entity (*'ayn*). It is said 'the *wajh* of a thing', 'the *wajh* of the problem', and 'the *wajh* of the decree' and what is meant thereby is their realities, entities and essences. Allah the Exalted says: *Some faces (wujuh) will be fresh on that day, looking at their Lord, and some faces (wujuh) will be scowling on that day, knowing that they will be dealt out a punishment breaking the spine.* [75:22-25] and the faces that are situated in the front of the human being are not characterised with *zann* [which is translated in the verse as 'knowing'], since that is only a characteristic of the reality (haqiqah) of the human being.[106]

In his enlightening treatise on the secrets of prayer, *al-Tanbihat al-'Illiyyah*, the esteemed Shi'ah scholar Zayn al-Din al-'Amili, well-known as al-

Shahid al-Thani (d. 1011/1602), subtly alludes to this reality when he says:

فأمر في الوضوء بغسل الوجه لأن التوجه والإقبال بوجه القلب على الله تعالى به، وفيه أكثر الحواس الظاهرة التي هي أعظم الأسباب الباعثة على مطالب الدنيا، فأَمر بغسله ليتوجه به وهو خال من تلك الأدناس

So He ordered in *Wudu'* for the face to be washed, because attention (*al-tawajjuh*) by the face of the heart is through the physical face, and it also contains most of the human senses which consist of the greatest causes that drive one to worldly endeavours. So He ordered that it should be washed, so that one may pay attention by it while he is free from those impurities…[107]

Observe the phrase '…*because attention by the face of the heart is through the physical face*'. This is because the entity which really pays attention is the heart and the soul of the human being. Hence, when we pray for our faces to become resplendent, our minds should not merely consider the physical face. We should rather pray for the reform of our hearts and their brilliance.

A similar meaning of *wajh* can be observed by the man of deep insight, the collector of intellectual and narrative sciences, the sage of his time, Mulla Hadi Sabzawari (d. 1289/1873), in his poetical masterpiece on the secrets of Islamic Law - *Nibras al-Huda*. When discussing the secrets of *Wudu'* he says:

إِذْ لاَزِمٌ تَطْهِيرُكُمْ خَوادِمَا فَالطُّهْرِ لِلإِسْفَهْبُدِ جَا اَلْزِمَا

إِذْ وَاجِبٌ تَطْهِيرُ قِشْرٍأَقْرَبُ وَأَبْعَدُ فَطُهْرُ لُبٍّ أَوْجَبُ

When it is incumbent on you to purify the servants [of the intellectual soul], then you must purify the isfahbud (commander in chief [i.e. the intellectual soul]);

When it is compulsory to purify the near-most and furthermost shells, the purification of the core is more compulsory;[108]

In short, Mulla Hadi Sabzawari would like to say that the members of the body are servants in comparison to the heart, which is the sovereign and commander in chief. It is therefore very unbecoming for the servants to be clean when the sovereign himself is dirty. If a great person therefore were to be in the presence of the sovereign and find him dirty, it would be a great shame.

The apparent washing therefore must act as a catalyst to transport the human being to his core, and help him clean his heart and spirit.

The Meaning of Yawm

The word *yawm* is translated as *zarfu zuhur al-ashya*’[109] (the realm where things appear). Hence when we say *yawm al-qiyamah* which we normally render as the Day of Resurrection, we mean the moment when the kernel of all things will appear. This meaning is also indicated in the following verse of the Holy Qur’an:

يَوْمَ تُبْلَى السَّرَائِرُ

On the day when the secrets are unveiled. (86:9)

One who is endowed with sharp inner vision (*basirah*) acknowledges that the human being in his inner reality is either in Hell-Fire or enjoying the gardens of Heaven, even while he or she still resides in this worldly plane. This is because the Hereafter is the kernel of this world and its inhabitants. The *qiyamah* would be realised when the kernel (*batin*) of this world would be unfolded:

The Holy Qur’an describing the disbelievers says that they are encompassed by Hell-Fire right now:

...وَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَمُحِيطَةٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ

…and indeed Hell is surely encompassing the unbelievers. (9:49)

No wonder, in the well-known supplication of the Big Armour (*al-Jawshan al-Kabir*), we always repeat the following sentence:

سُبْحَانَكَ يَا لا إِلَهَ إِلا أَنْتَ الْغَوْثَ الْغَوْثَ خَلِّصْنَا مِنَ النَّارِ يَا رَبِّ

Free from imperfections are You, O One other than whom there is no God, help us, help us, and *free us from the Hell-Fire* O Lord![110]

The phrase 'free us from the Hell-Fire O Lord' means that we are entangled in the Hell-Fire now. Otherwise it would make no sense to say 'free us'.

There are many other supplications that allude to the reality that the human being due to his misdeeds is entangled with the Hell-Fire in the higher realms. Observe the following examples:

a) In a well-known daily supplication of the holy month of Ramadan we say:

فَيَا ذَا الْمَنِّ وَلا يُمَنُّ عَلَيْكَ مُنَّ عَلَيَّ بِفَكَاكِ رَقَبَتِي مِنَ النَّار

O the Benefactor upon whom favour is not bestowed, favour me by *releasing my neck from the Hell-Fire*...[111]

b) During the nights of Qadr of the holy month of Ramadan, we recite the following famous supplication when we open the Holy Qur'an:

أَنْ تَجْعَلَنِي مِنْ عُتَقَائِكَ مِنَ النَّارِ

...that you make me from among *those whom you have freed from Hell-Fire*.[112]

c) In the well-known supplication of 'Arafah, it is narrated that a time came when Imam al-Husayn ('a) lifted his head and eyes toward Heaven. Tears were flowing from his blessed eyes as if they were two waterskins, and he said in a loud voice:

صَلِّ عَلى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، السَّادَةِ الْمَيامِيْنَ، وَأَسْأَلُكَ اللَّهُمَّ حَاجَتِي الَّتِيْ اِن أَعْطَيتَنِيهَا لَم يَضرُّنِي مَا مَنَعتَنِي، وَإِن مَنَعتَنِيهَا لَم يَنفَعنِي مَا أَعْطَيْتَنِي، أسأَلُكَ **فَكَاكَ رَقَبَتِي مِنَ النَّارِ**

Shower Your mercy on Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad, the chiefs, the fortunate. And, I ask of You, O God, my need. If You grant it to me, what You hold back from me will cause me no harm; and if You hold it back from me, what You grant me will not profit me. I ask *You to deliver my neck from the Fire.*[113]

d) In the well-known *ziyarah* called *Ziyarat al-Ta'ziyah* normally recited on the Day of 'Ashura', we are taught to say:

يَا مَوْلايَ يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ اللهِ أَنَا ضَيْفُ اللهِ وَضَيْفُكَ وَجَارُ اللهِ وَجَارُكَ وَلِكُلِّ ضَيْفٍ وَجَارٍ قِرًى وَ قِرَايَ فِي هَذَا الْوَقْتِ أَنْ تَسْأَلَ اللهَ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى أَنْ يَرْزُقَنِي **فَكَاكَ رَقَبَتِي مِنَ النَّارِ** إِنَّهُ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ قَرِيبٌ مُجِيبٌ

O my Master, O Aba 'Abdillah, I am the guest of Allah and your guest, and Allah is my shelter and you [too] are my shelter. And for every guest there is a banquet; and the banquet I seek in these moments is that you ask Allah, the Immaculate and Exalted, to provide me with *the freedom of my neck from the Hell-Fire*; Indeed He is the Hearer of prayer, the All-Near, and Responder [of those who call unto Him].[114]

Notice that all the above quotations allude to the situation of a person who is already entangled with Hell-Fire. This explanation is how the phrase 'release from Hell-Fire' can make sense; otherwise a different expression would have been employed.

Observe the following tradition:

رُوِيَ عَنِ النَّبِيّ (صَلّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ): اَنَّهُ كَانَ قَاعِـدًا مَـعَ أَصْـحَابِهِ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ، فَسَمِعُوْا هُدَّةً عَظِيْمَةً فَارْتَاعُوْا، فَقَالَ (صَـلّى اللهُ عَلَيْـهِ وَآلِه): «أَتَعْرِفُوْنَ مَا هَذِهِ الْهُـدَّة»؟ قَـالُوْا: «اَللهُ وَرَسُـوْلُهُ اَعْلَـمْ» قَـالَ: «حَجَرٌ أُلْقِيَ مِنْ أَعْلى جَهَنّم مُنْذُ سَبْعِيْنَ سَنَة، الآنْ وَصَلَ إِلى قَعْرِهَـا، وَمِنْ سُقُوْطِهِ فِيْهَا، هَذِهِ الْهُدَّة» فَمَا فَرِغَ مِنْ كَلاَمِـهِ اِلاَّ وَالصّراخُ فِي دَارِ مُنَافِقٍ مِنَ الْمُنَافِقِيْنَ قَدْ مَاتَ، وَكَانَ عُمْـرُهُ سَـبْعِيْنَ سَـنَة، فَقَـالَ رَسُوْلُ اللهِ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وآلِهِ): «اَللهُ أَكْبَر» فَعَلِمَـتِ الصَّـحَابَةُ اَنّ هَذَا الْحَجَرِ هُوَ ذَلِكَ وَاَنَّهُ مُذْ خَلَقَهُ اللهُ يَهْوِي فِيْ جَهَـنَّم فَلَمَّـا مَـاتَ حَصَلَ فِيْ قَعْرِهَا قَالَ تَعَالى: اِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِيْنَ فِي الدَّرَكِ الاَسْفَلِ مِنَ النّارِ

It is reported from the Prophet (S) that he was [once] sitting with his companions in the mosque, and they suddenly heard a great sound, and they became frightened; so the Prophet (s) said: Do you know what this sound is? His companions said: Allah and His Messenger are more knowledgeable. The Prophet (s) said: It is a stone that was thrown from the top of *Jahannam* (Hell) seventy years ago, and now has reached its bottom; and this noise is due to its fall in it. The Holy Prophet (s) had not yet finished his speech when there was a cry of weeping in the house of one of the hypocrites who had just died and he was aged seventy. So the Messenger of Allah (s) said: *Allahu Akbar*! Consequently the companions understood that the stone spoken about was that very hypocrite, and that he was falling in *Jahannam* ever since Allah created him, and when he died he reached the bottom of the pit. Allah has said: *Surely the hypocrites are in the lowest stage of the Hell-Fire…*(4:145)[115]

Therefore, when reciting the aforementioned prayer of washing the face, the supplicant should not only seek a resplendent heart on the final day, but

should seek the same at that very moment. In reality, the supplicant seeks for an immediate change in himself so that his inner self is transformed into brightness. He also seeks aloofness from having a dark complexion in the higher levels of his existence, which those who are endowed with a sharp inner vision, due to their purity, can easily behold while they still reside in this world of darkness.

Factors that Darken or Illuminate One's Wajh

It is important for us to realise that while we wash our faces, we must not suffice ourselves with supplications. We must try to understand the elements that darken or brighten the face or heart of a human being in the higher levels of reality.

Various verses and traditions allude to the factors that darken or brighten one's *wajh* on the Judgement Day. Consider the following references:

1. The Holy Qur'an says:

يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوهٌ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوهٌ **فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ اسْوَدَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ أَكْفَرْتُم بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ** فَذُوقُواْ الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ. وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ابْيَضَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ فَفِي رَحْمَةِ اللهِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

On the day when [some] faces will turn bright and [some] faces will turn dark. *As for those whose faces turn dark [it will be said to them], 'Did you disbelieve after your faith?* So taste the punishment because of what you used to disbelieve.' But as for those whose faces become bright, they shall dwell in God's mercy, and they will remain in it [forever]. (3:106-107)

2. The Holy Qur'an says:

وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ تَرَى **الَّذِينَ كَذَبُواْ عَلَى اللهِ وُجُوهُهُم مُّسْوَدَّةٌ** أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِّلْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ

On the Day of Resurrection you will see *those who attributed lies to God with their faces darkened*. Is not the [final] abode of the arrogant in Hell? (39:60)

3. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

يَا عَلِيُّ إِيَّاكَ وَالْكِذْبُ **فَإِنَّ الْكِذْبَ يُسَوِّدُ الْوَجْهَ** ثُمَّ يُكْتَبُ عِنْدَ اللهِ كَذَّاباً **وَإِنَّ الصِّدْقَ يُبَيِّضُ الْوَجْهَ**

O ‘Ali, beware of lies; *for verily a lie darkens the face*, and thereafter, [the one who has lied] is recorded as a liar with Allah; *and surely truth brightens the face*…[116]

4. In one of his sermons, the Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

وَإِنَّ **تَقْوَى اللهِ تُبَيِّضُ الْوُجُوهَ**، وَتُرْضِي الرَّبَّ، وَتَرْفَعُ الدَّرَجَةَ

Indeed *God-wariness brightens the faces* and pleases the Lord, and elevates the station…

5. Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) is reported to have said:

صَلَوةُ اللَّيْلِ **تُبَيِّضُ الْوُجُوهَ**

The Night Prayer *brightens the faces*.[117]

6. Amir al-mu’minin (‘a) is reported to have said:

أَيُّمَا مُؤْمِنٍ مَنَعَ مُؤْمِناً شَيْئاً مِمَّا يَحْتَاجُ إِلَيْهِ، وَهُوَ يَقْدِرُ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ عِنْدِهِ، أَوْ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِهِ، أَقَامَهُ اللهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ **مُسْوَدّاً وَجْهُهُ**

Whosoever among the believers deprives a believer from something that the latter needs, while he is able to avail him with the same from himself or other than him, Allah would resurrect him on the Judgement Day *while his face would be dark*.[118]

7. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

إِنَّ شَارِبَ الْخَمْرِ يَجِيْءُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ **مُسْوَدًّا وَجْهُهُ**

Indeed one who drinks wine will arrive on the Judgement Day *while his face shall be dark*…[119]

8. In a conversation with Imam ‘Ali (‘a), the Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

وَإِنَّ شِيْعَتَكَ عَلَى مَنَابِرَ مِنْ نُوْرٍ **مُبْيَضَّةٌ وُجُوْهُهُمْ** حَوْلِيْ أَشْفَعُ لَهُمْ وَيَكُوْنُوْنَ فِي الْجَنَّةِ جِيْرَانِيْ

…and your followers shall be besides me on pulpits of light, *their faces being resplendent*; and I shall intercede on their behalf; and they would be my neighbours in Paradise.[120]

9. In one of the supplications taught to us after bidding farewell near the luminant tomb of Imam ‘Ali (‘a), we say:

اَللَّهُمَّ تَجَاوَزْ عَنْ سَيِّئَاتِيْ وَأَبْدِلْ ذَلِكَ بِالْحَسَنَاتِ وَلاَ تُخَفِّفْ بِذَلِكَ مِيْزَانِيْ، **وَلاَ تُسَوِّدْ بِهِ وَجْهِيْ**

O Allah, overlook my misdeeds and transform them into virtues and do not make my scale light thereby, *nor darken my face with the same*…[121]

10. Amir al-mu’minin (‘a) was once asked:

أَيُّ شَيْءٍ مِمَّا خَلَقَ اللهُ أَحْسَنَ؟

What is the most beautiful thing that Allah created?

And the Imam (‘a) said:

اَلْكَلاَم

Speech

Then he (‘a) was asked:

أَيُّ شَيْءٍ مِمَّا خَلَقَ اللهُ أَقْبَح؟

What is the ugliest thing that Allah created?

And the Imam (‘a) said:

اَلْكَلاَم

Speech

Then he said:

بِالْكَلاَمِ **ابْيَضَّتِ** الْوُجُوهُ، وَبِالْكَلاَمِ **اسْوَدَّتِ** الْوُجُوهُ

It is by speech *that faces turn bright* and it is by speech *that faces turn dark*.[122]

11. Imam Zayn al-‘Abidin (‘a) in a whispered prayer to Almighty Allah says:

فَارْحَمْ تَضَرُّعَنَا، وَكَبْوَنَا لِوَجْهِكَ **وُجُوهُنَا الْمُسْوَدَّةَ مِنْ ذُنُوبِنَا**

…and have mercy on our humility and our falling before Thy face; *our faces have been darkened with our sins*…[123]

12. Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (‘a) is reported to have said:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ (ص) إِنَّ عَنْ يَمِينِ الْعَرْشِ قَوْماً **وُجُوهُهُمْ مِنْ نُورٍ عَلَى مَنَابِرَ مِنْ نُورٍ** يَغْبِطُهُمُ النَّبِيُّونَ لَيْسُوا بِأَنْبِيَاءَ وَلَا شُهَدَاءَ فَقَالُوا يَا نَبِيَّ اللهِ وَمَا ازْدَادُوا هَؤُلَاءِ مِنَ اللهِ إِذَا لَمْ يَكُونُوا أَنْبِيَاءَ وَلَا شُهَدَاءَ إِلَّا قُرْباً مِنَ اللهِ قَالَ أُولَئِكَ شِيعَةُ عَلِيٍّ وَعَلِيٌّ إِمَامُهُمْ

The Holy Prophet (s) said: Indeed on the right hand side of the Divine Throne there are a people *whose faces are of light, stationed on pulpits of light*; the Prophets are envious of them, although they neither are Prophets nor martyrs. They [the companions nearby] asked: O Apostle of Allah (s), what then increased them to the divine proximity, if they were neither Prophets nor martyrs? He said: They are the followers of 'Ali (*shi'atu 'Ali*) and 'Ali is their Imam.[124]

13. Imam Muhammad al-Baqir ('a) is reported to have said:

اَلْمُتَحَابُّوْنَ فِي اللهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَلَى مَنَابِرَ مِنْ نُوْرٍ، **قَدْ أَضَاءَ نُوْرُ وُجُوْهِهِمْ أَجْسَادَهُمْ** وَنُوْرُ مَنَابِرِهِمْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى يُعْرَفُوْا بِالْمُتَحَابِّيْنَ فِي اللهِ

On the Resurrection Day those who mutually love each other in the way of Allah will be stationed on pulpits of light, *and the light of their faces would have illuminated their bodies*, and the light of their pulpits would have brightened everything, so that they are known as those who possessed mutual love in the way of Allah.[125]

14. Amir al-mu'minin ('a) is reported to have said:

يَخْرُجُ أَهْلُ وِلاَيَتِنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنْ قُبُوْرِهِمْ **مُشْرِقَةً وُجُوْهُهُمْ**

The people of our guardianship will come out of their graves on the Resurrection Day, *while their faces shall be radiant*.[126]

If we carefully study the abovementioned traditions we will realise that the fundamental factor of darkness in the Hereafter is disbelief and sin whereas the fundamental factor of brilliance is genuine belief[127] and *taqwa* (God-wariness). Therefore it is by resolving to undertake the path of *taqwa* that a person can achieve what he prays for while washing his face.

Washing the physical face therefore always serves as a reminder for cleansing one's heart and spiritual face. Apart from its ontological and

causal advantage mentioned in different traditions, it is a reminding force for whosoever performs the ablution.

Our Aim Should be Wajhullah

The genitive construction *wajh Allah* is literally rendered as *ma yutawajjahu bihi ila Allah* (that with which one pays attention to Allah) or the means of attention to Allah. Since the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) are known to guide and lead toward Allah through their character traits, words, and deeds, they are *wajh Allah*. Furthermore, in a subtler sense, since they are the intermediaries of divine grace (*wasa’it al-fayd al-ilahi*), attention to Allah also is ontologically through them. Hence they serve as *wajh Allah*.

In an interesting conversation, a companion of Imam al-Rida (‘a), ‘Abd al-Salam al-Herawi, asks him some questions and the Imam (‘a) responds in a very beautiful way. One of the questions he asks is as follows:

قَالَ: فَقُلْتُ لَهُ: يَا بْنَ رَسُوْلِ اللهِ، فَمَا مَعْنَى الْخَبَرِ الَّذِيْ رَوَوْهُ: أَنَّ ثَوَابَ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللهُ اَلنَّظَرُ إِلَى وَجْهِ اللهِ؟ فَقَالَ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ): يَا أَبَا الصَّلْتِ، مَنْ وَصَفَ اللهَ بِوَجْهٍ كَالْوُجُوْهِ فَقَدْ كَفَرَ، وَلَكِنَّ وَجْهَ اللهِ أَنْبِيَائُهُ وَرُسُلُهُ وَحُجَجُهُ (صَلَوَاتُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِمْ)، هُمُ الَّذِيْنَ **بِهِمْ يُتَوَجَّهُ إِلَى اللهِ**

He [al-Herawi] said: I asked him [The Imam (‘a)]: O son of the Apostle of Allah (‘a), then what is the meaning of the narration they quote that [states] the reward of *La ilaha illa Allah* (other than Allah, there is no god) is to look at the face of Allah? Thereupon he [the Imam (‘a)] said: O Aba al-Salt, whosoever describes Allah with a face like the conventionally known faces, has indeed covered the truth. Rather, *wajh Allah* are His Prophets, Apostles, and Proofs (upon whom be Allah’s abundant mercy). They are the ones *through whom Allah is paid attention to (hum alladhina bihim yutawajjahu ila Allah*)…[128]

In the well-known *Ziyarat al-Jami'ah al-Kabirah*, Imam 'Ali al- Naqi ('a) teaches us to address the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) as follows:

مَنْ أَرَادَ اللهَ بَدَءَ بِكُمْ... وَمَنْ قَصَدَهُ تَوَجَّهَ بِكُمْ

Whosoever seeks Allah, begins through you… and whosoever intends Him *pays attention through you…*[129]

Hence they are the *wajhullah* and through them others pay attention to Allah.

A Subtler Meaning of Wajhullah

Sometimes the genitive construction *wajh Allah* instead of being rendered as the means of attention to Allah (*ma yutawajjahu bihi ila Allah*), is translated as the means of attention of Allah (*ma yatawajjahu bihi Allah*). The difference comes about due to the difference in meaning of the link between the first term (*mudaf*)[130] and the second term (*mudaf ilayhi*) of the genitive construction. In the previous interpretation, by saying *wajh Allah* we meant that the object of attention is Allah, just like when we say *'ilm Allah* (knowledge of Allah) we mean that the object of knowledge is Allah. In this present interpretation however, by *wajh Allah* we mean 'the *wajh* that belongs to Allah'.

In other words, it is through the *wajh* that Allah pays attention. As explained earlier, such a meaning is never taken literally, for Allah is beyond anthropomorphic limitations. *Wajh Allah* rather refers to the perfect human being who has realised the fact that everything is a locus of manifestation of His attributes.

Those who have been successful in traversing the spiritual journey to Allah, reach a point where every member of their body is attributed to Allah. They become mere instruments of Allah. The real doer is Allah and they are His intermediaries. This should however not mislead one to think that Allah needs them to carry out His actions, for they themselves are the very actions of Allah. Perhaps the following verse speaks about this station:

فَلَمْ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَلَـكِنَّ اللّهَ قَتَلَهُمْ وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَـكِنَّ اللّهَ رَمَى وَلِيُبْلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْهُ بَلاء حَسَناً إِنَّ اللّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

You [O Prophet] did not kill them; rather it was Allah who killed them; and you did not throw when you threw, rather it was Allah who threw, that He might test the faithful with a good test from Himself. Indeed Allah is All-Hearing, All- Knowing. (8:17)

Amir al-mu'minin ('a), having attained heights of perfection, says about himself:

أَنَا وَجْهُ اللهِ تَعَالى فِي السَّمَاواتِ

I am the face of Allah in the heavens…[131]

Since Imam 'Ali ('a) is a locus of manifestation of Allah's attributes, he serves as *wajhullah*, or a representative of Allah who attends to His creatures. In fact, Allah attends to His servants through the infallible Prophets, and the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

Imam Abu Ja'far [al-Baqir] ('a) is reported to have said:

وَنَحْنُ لِسَانُ اللهِ، وَنَحْنُ وَجْهُ اللهِ، وَنَحْنُ عَيْنُ اللهِ فِي خَلْقِهِ

…and we are the tongue of Allah, and we are the face of Allah, and we are the eye of Allah among His creation…[132]

The gnostics say that this station is acquired by observing the obligatory deeds and attaining the proximity of Allah. In their terminology it is referred to as *qurb al-fara'id* (proximity attained through obligatory deeds).[133]

With regard to the Holy Prophet (s) and the infallible Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), it is beyond the scope of our limited understanding to judge the loftiness of their status.

In conclusion, as we wash our faces and recite the Alawite prayer under discussion, we must not limit ourselves with the periphery. We should struggle to soar to attain the heights.

CHAPTER 4

Appreciating the Secrets of Wudu'

On Washing the Right Hand

CHAPTER 4

On Washing the Right Hand
(Ghasl al-Yad al-Yumna)

Amir al-mu'minin ('a) teaches his son Muhammad ibn Hanafiyyah to recite the following supplication when washing the right hand:

اَللَّهُمَّ اَعْطِنِيْ كِتَابِيْ بِيَمِيْنِيْ وَالْخُـلْدَ فِي الْجِنَـانِ بِيَسَـارِيْ، وَحَاسِـبْنِيْ حِسَابًا يَسِيْرًا

O Allah, give me my book [of deeds] in my right hand, and a permanent stay in the abodes of Heaven without difficulty, and account me [for my deeds] with an easy accounting.[134]

This supplication serves as a point of ascent to the higher realities. While the one who performs ablution washes his right hand, he prays to be among the *ashab al-yamin* (the companions of prosperity), those who qualify to permanently reside in Heaven and enjoy an easy reckoning (*hisaban yasiran*). All these aspirations can be attained by their specific means. The supplicant therefore should strive to achieve these means in order to realise the lofty aspirations.

A Word on the Book of Deeds

It should be known that when we speak about *book of deeds* we should not conceive a common book, for 'book' here refers to the human self which is united with its beliefs, words and deeds. The Holy Qur'an alludes to this reality when it says:

اِقْرَأْ كِتَابَكَ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا

Read your book. Sufficient is your self today as your own reckoner. (17:14)

Since the Day of Judgement is the day when the secrets shall be unveiled, the kernel of the human being will become apparent, and thus no other person is needed to account for his deeds. He himself is sufficient as a reckoner.

To be given the book in the right hand should not lead us to think of the physical right and left hand, for both the hands of a believer are *yamin* and prosperous. The word *yamin* is an adjective, meaning prosperity that denotes both intensity and permanence. Hence, both the believers' hands [which serve as manifestations of power] are abundantly and permanently prosperous.

Sayyid 'Ali Khan al-Madani (d. 1120/1708) in his *Riyad al-Salikin* quotes a Shi'ah scholar as saying:

كلّ ما يدركه الإنسان بحواسّه يرتفع منه أثر إلى روحه ويجتمع في صحيفة ذاته وخزانة مدركاته، وكذلك كلّ مثقال ذرّة من خير أو شرّ يعمله يرى أثره مكتوبا ثمّة، لا سيّما ما رسخت بسببه الهيئات وتأكّدت به الصفات وصار خلقا وملكة فالأفاعيل المتكرّرة والاعتقادات الراسخة في النفوس هي بمنزلة النقوش الكتابيّة في الألواح كما قال تعالى: أُولَئِكَ كَتَبَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمانَ وهذه الألواح النفسيّة يقال لها صحائف الأعمال وإليه الإشارة بقوله سبحانه: وَإِذَا الصُّحُفُ نُشِرَتْ فمن كان من أهل السعادة وأصحاب اليمين وكانت معلوماته أمورا قدسيّة، وأخلاقه زكيّة، وأعماله صالحة، أوتي كتابه بيمينه، أعني من جانبه الأقوى الروحاني، وهو جهة عليّين، وذلك لأنّ كتابه من جنس الألواح العالية، والصحف المكرمة المرفوعة المطهرة بأيدي سفرة كرام بررة يشهده المقرّبون، ومن كان من أهل الشّقاء المردودين، وكانت معلوماته مقصورة على الجزئيّات، وأخلاقه خبيثة، وأعماله سيّئة، أوتي كتابه بشماله، أعني من جانبه الأضعف الجسماني وهو جهة سجّين، وهو فعيل من السجن، سمّى به ديوان الشرّ الذي دوّن فيه أعمال الكفرة والفجرة من الثقلين

Whatever the human being perceives through his senses leaves an effect in his spirit and is stored in the scroll of his spirit and the treasure trove of his perceptions. Likewise, he finds the effect of every atom's weight of good or evil that he performs written there, especially those deeds that have resulted in fixed traits and permanent attributes, and have become a *khulq and malakah (fixed trait).* Therefore, repeated acts and firm convictions in the souls are like written engravings on tablets. Allah, the Exalted says: They are those in whose hearts He wrote belief (*ula'ika kataba fi qulubihim al-imana*) (58:22); and these tablets of spirit are known as the scrolls of deeds (*saha'if al-a'mal*), and to that does the following verse allude: And when the scrolls would be unfolded (*wa idha al-suhufu nushirat*) (81:10); then whosoever is among the people of felicity and the companions of the right hand and possesses sacred knowledge, pure morals, and good deeds, would

be given his book in his right hand, i.e. from the higher spiritual plane, and that is the plane of the exalted ones (‘*illiyyin*); this is because his book is from the category of the exalted tablets and the honoured scriptures, exalted and purified, in the hands of envoys, noble and pious (80:13-16), witnessed by those near to God (83:21), and whosoever is among the people of wretchedness, those driven from divine proximity, and his knowledge is limited to particularities (*juz’iyyat*), and he possesses evil character and bad deeds, would be given his book in his left hand [69:25], meaning that he would be given his book from his lower material plane, which is the plane of sijjin, the exaggerative form of *al-sijn* (prison). For this reason, it has been named the book of evil deeds, in which is recorded the deeds of the disbelievers and mischief mongers from the *thaqalayn* (jinn and human beings)…[135]

How Does the Slate of Our Essence Darken

Although from the aforesaid traditions we have gained a general idea about the causes of the darkness or brilliance of the spirit, it would be more beneficial to understand it in greater detail.

Mulla Sadra (d. 1050/1640) in his magnum opus *al-Hikmah al-Muta‘aliyah fi al-Asfar al-‘Aqliyyah al-Arba‘ah* explains the phenomenon of how the good and bad deeds are recorded in the tablet of one’s heart and how one achieves either eternal salvation or eternal damnation:

من فعل فعلا أو تكلم بقول، يظهر منه أثر في نفسه وحالة قلبية تبقى زمانا. وإذا تكررت الافاعيل والاقاويل، استحكمت الآثار في النفس، فصارت الاحوال ملكات، إذ الفرق بين الملكة والحال بالشدة والضعف والاشتداد في الكيفية يؤدي إلى حصول صورة جوهرية هي مبدء مثل تلك الكيفية؛ كالحرارة الضعيفة في الفحم إذا اشتدت صارت صورة نارية محرقة، وكذلك الكيفية النفسانية إذا اشتدت صارت ملكة راسخة، أي صورة نفسانية هي مبدء آثار مختصة بها، فيصدر بسببها الفعل المناسب لها بسهولة من غير روِيَّة وتعمُّلٍ

…Whosoever performs a deed or utters a speech, it leaves an effect in his soul and a state of heart (*halah qalbiyyah*) that remains for some duration. And if the deeds and words are repeated, their effects become strengthened in the soul, and the states (*al-ahwal*) turn into fixed traits (*malakat*), for the difference between a fixed trait (*malakah*) and a state (*hal*) is in intensity and weakness; and intensity in quality (*kayfiyyah*) leads to attaining a substance form (*surah jawhariyyah*), which would [then] be the [generating] origin of a similar quality. This can be illustrated by taking the example of low heat in a piece of coal: when its heat increases, it becomes a form of fire that burns. Such is the case with any quality of the soul; if it increases in intensity it becomes a firmly fixed trait, i.e. a form of the soul which would be the origin of its specific effects; hence because of that, the action appropriate to it ensues easily without any deliberation and thought.

In brief, we understand that:

• Any act that we do, whether in the form of speech or otherwise leaves an effect on the soul which is known as a *hal* (a state).

• If a particular act whether good or bad is repeated, the *hal* (state) changes into a *malakah* (fixed trait).

• The *malakah* then serves as the origin of its respective action.

The secret of abiding for eternity (*al-khulud*) in Hell-Fire for some transgressors is explained by this very principle. Some argue: Why should one who has committed a sin for approximately ninety years of his life for example, face eternal damnation? The answer to this is quite simple: It [the punishment] is the manifestation of the trait which he generated himself that would be the source of punishment. There is no external punishment as some of us tend to suppose.

We should however understand a very important principle: action is closely linked with ‘*aqidah* (belief). It is the iteration of wrong action that changes one’s belief gradually to a point that one considers the actions as pleasant and praiseworthy. At that moment one has already lost one’s belief and formed fixed traits that have united with one’s soul. Although one cannot comprehend their torturous existence in this world, one would be able to perceive it in the Hereafter.

The Holy Qur’an says the following about those whose sins led to disbelief:

ثُمَّ كَانَ عَاقِبَةَ الَّذِينَ أَسَاؤُوا السُّوأَى أَن كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللهِ وَكَانُوا بِهَا يَسْتَهْزِئُون

Then the fate of those who committed misdeeds was that they denied the signs of Allah and they used to deride them. (30:10)

The following tradition also hints to the process of how the heart blackens until one loses his faith and cannot revert any more:

عَنْ اَبِي بَصِيْر قالَ: سَمِعْتُ اَبَا عَبْدِ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ يَقُوْلُ: إِذَا اَذْنَبَ الرَّجُلُ خَرَجَ فِي قَلْبِهِ نُكْتَةٌ سَوْدَاء فَاِنْ تَابَ اِنْمَحَتْ وَإِنْ زَادَ زَادَتْ حَتّى تَغْلِب عَلى قَلْبِهِ فَلاَ يَفْلَحُ بَعْدَهَا اَبَدًا

It is narrated from Abu Basir: I heard Aba Abdillah [al-Sadiq (‘a)] saying: When a man sins, a black spot appears in his heart; and if he repents it is effaced; but if he increases in sin, it increases, until it overcomes the heart, after which he shall never prosper.[136]

A Word on the Companions of the Right Hand

It is imperative to note that in the way that some parts of the Qur’an explain other parts (*al-Qur’anu yufassiru ba‘duhu ba‘dan*), some parts of the traditions of the infallible leaders of Islam serve as expositions for other parts. Appreciating this principle, and bearing in mind that in order to achieve the level of the people of the right hand, we must first seek the causes that would elevate us to that level; let us look, therefore, at the following traditions:

1. Imam al-Baqir (‘a) is reported to have said:

فَأَمَّا الْمُؤْمِنُ فَيُعْطى كِتَابَه بِيَمِيْنِهِ

But as for the believer, he would be given his book in his right hand.[137]

Here we should carefully consider the meaning of a *mu'min* which is quite different from a Muslim who has submitted but belief has not yet entered his or her heart. The Holy Qur'an speaks of a certain group who claim to be believers but in reality are not:

قَالَتِ الأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا قُل لَّمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِن قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ...

The bedouins say, 'We have believed.' Say, 'You have not believed [yet]; rather say, "We have surrendered to Islam," for belief has not yet entered into your hearts…' (49:14)

There is also a vast difference between knowledge and belief. Belief is when the knowledge enters the heart and the heart accepts the same.

2. Imam al-Baqir ('a) is reported to have said:

نَحْنُ وَشِيْعَتُنَا أَصْحَابُ الْيَمِيْنِ

We and our Shi'ahs are the people of the right hand.[138]

This tradition, in reality, explains the previous tradition. In order to be a true *mu'min*, one must be a true follower of the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) in belief, thought, and actions. In fact the word shi'ah gives a broader connotation. A true shi'ah of someone is he who, besides following him, also spreads his creed through speech, action, etc.

3. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

أَلاَ وَمَنْ اَحَبَّ عَلِيًّا اَعْطَاهُ اللهُ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِيْنِهِ، وَحَاسَبَهُ حِسَابَ الأَنْبِيَاء

Whosoever loves 'Ali, Allah would give him his book in his right hand and account him [for his deeds] like the accounting of the Prophets of Allah.[139]

It is imperative to note that *hubb* (love) mentioned in the above tradition is not merely an evanescent emotional inclination. Both the Qur'an and the holy traditions illustrate what is really meant by *hubb* in such traditions. One of the fundamental conditions of *hubb*, we are told, is *al-ittiba'* (to follow). Observe the following:

The Holy Qur'an says:

قُلْ إِن كُنتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

Say, 'If you love Allah, then follow me; Allah will love you and forgive you your sins, and Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.' (3:31)

Here the condition for love of Allah is to follow the Prophet, who brings the commandments of Allah to mankind. In other words, Almighty Allah would like to inform mankind that if they love Him, then they should follow what He says. And that can be realised by following His Messenger, who commands only what Allah wants.

Abu 'Ubaydah narrates:

عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَر(عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ) قَالَ: مَنْ أَحَبَّنَا فَهُوَ مِنَّا أَهْلِ الْبَيْتِ: قُلْتُ: جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ مِنْكُمْ؟ قَالَ: مِنَّا وَاللهِ، أَمَا سَمِعْتَ قَوْلَ إِبْرَاهِيْم(ع): (فَمَنْ تَبِعَنِي فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي)

Abu Ja'far ('a) said: Whosoever loves us is from us, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). So I [Abu 'Ubaydah] asked him ('a): May I be made your ransom; from you [the Ahl al-Bayt ('a)]? He ('a) said: [Yes,] from us, I swear by Allah! Have you not heard the word of Ibrahim ('a) '*whosoever follows me is from me*'? (14:36)

Notice the above tradition carefully. Imam ('a) equates his statement with Prophet Ibrahim's words. This means that his statement 'whosoever loves us is from us' is like '*whosoever follows me is from me*'. In other words, he

equates *hubb* (love) with *al-ittiba‘* (to follow). Hence if love for the Beloved has no element of submission to Him, then it is either peripheral love or not true love.

4. Abu Ja‘far (‘a) is reported to have said:

مَنْ أَدْمَنَ فِيْ فَرَائِضِهِ وَنَوَافِلِهِ قِرَاءَةَ سُوْرَةِ ق أعْطاه كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِيْنِهِ، وَحَاسَبَهُ حِسَابًا يَسِيْرًا

Whosoever constantly recites Surah Qaf [chapter 50 of the Qur’an] in his obligatory as well as supererogatory prayers, Allah shall give him his book in his right hand and account him for his deeds, an easy accounting.[140]

It should be understood that reciting that is mentioned in the above tradition should not make us conjecture that the mere reading of the chapter, without contemplation and resolution to change, reaps the abovementioned benefit. *Qira’ah* (recitation) has a loftier signification. If one looks at other traditions, one would understand that *qira’ah* means to epitomise and embody oneself with the object of recitation. Observe the following:

عَنْ مُحَمّد بْنِ سِنَان عَنِ المُفَضّل، عَنِ الصَّادِقِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: عَلَيْكُمْ بِمَكَارِمِ الأخْلاَقِ فَإِنَّ اللهَ عَزَّوَجَلَّ يُحِبُّهَا، وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَمَذَامّ الأَفْعَالِ فَإِنَّ اللهَ عَزَّوَجَلَّ يَبْغُضُهُ، وَعَلَيْكُمْ بِتِلاَوَةِ الْقُرْآنِ فَإِنَّ دَرَجَاتِ الْجَنَّةِ عَلَى عَدَدِ آياتِ الْقُرْآنِ فَإِذَا كَانَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يُقَالُ لِقَارِئِ الْقُرْآنِ: اِقْرَأ وَارْقَ، فَكُلَّمَا قَرَأَ آيَةً رَقَى دَرَجَةً

Muhammad ibn Sinan narrates from Mufaddal, who narrates from al-Sadiq (‘a) that he said: Acquire the noble traits, for indeed Allah, the Invincible and Majestic, loves them; and remain aloof from the abhorred actions, for indeed Allah, the Invincible and Majestic, hates them; and read the Qur’an, for surely the grades of Paradise are equal to the number of the verses of the Qur’an; and when the Day of Judgement transpires, the reciter of the

Qur'an shall be told: Read, and ascend! And whenever he would recite a verse he would ascend a level…[141]

The short, but very meaningful phrase *'iqra' warqa* (read and ascend!)' reveals so much to learn. *Qira'ah* here is employed to denote something higher than mere pronunciation. It signifies the embodiment and realisation of the teaching of the verse within oneself. Otherwise, mere recitation without any contemplation and change does not cause ascension. Observe the following traditions:

The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

رُبَّ تَالِ الْقُرْآنِ وَالْقُرْآنُ يَلْعَنُهُ

How often there is a reciter of the Qur'an while the Qur'an curses him.[142]

أَنْتَ تَقْرَءُ الْقُرْآنَ مَا نَهَاكَ، فَإِذَا لَمْ يَنْهَك فَلَسْت تَقْرَأُهُ

You are reciting Qur'an so long as it forbids you [from evil]; but when it does not do so, then you are not [actually] reciting it.[143]

أَكْثَرُ مُنَافِقِي أُمَّتِي قُرَّاؤُهَا

Most of the hypocrites of my nation are its reciters [i.e. the reciters of the Qur'an].

لَيْسَ الْقُرْآنُ بِالتِّلاَوَةِ وَلاَ الْعِلْمُ بِالرِّوَايَةِ، وَلَكِنَّ الْقُرْآنَ بِالْهِدَايَةِ وَالْعِلْمَ بِالدِّرَايَةِ

Qur'an is not by recitation, nor is knowledge through narration, but the Qur'an is through guidance and knowledge through comprehension.[144]

Amir al-mu'minin ('a) is reported to have said:

اِنَّ رَسُوْلَ اللهِ حَدَّثَنَا اَنَّ قَوْمًا يَخْرُجُوْنَ فِيْ آخَرِ الزَّمَانِ يَقْرَؤُوْنَ الْقُرْآنَ لاَ يُجَاوِزُ حَنَاجِرَهُمْ

Indeed the Apostle of Allah (s) narrated to us that in the later times a people would appear who would read the Qur'an, and their recitation would not go beyond their throats.[145]

Having considered the aforesaid, we say that the aforementioned tradition on recitation of Surah Qaf refers to that kind of recitation that is accompanied by understanding and resolution to change, such that one is led to identify and epitomise himself with the teachings of the chapter he read in his prayers, and Allah is All-Knowing.

5. Imam al-Baqir ('a) is reported to have said:

مَنْ قَرَأَ سُوْرَةَ الدّخَان فِيْ فَرَايِضِهِ وَنَوَافِلِهِ بَعَثَهُ اللهُ مَعَ الآمِنِيْنَ يَوْمَ القِيَامَةِ وَظَلَّهُ تَحْتَ عَرْشِهِ **وَحَاسَبَهُ حِسَابًا يَسِيْرًا** وَأَعْطَاهُ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِيْنِهِ

Whosoever recites Surat al-Dukhkhan [chapter 44 of the Qur'an] in his obligatory and supererogatory prayers, Allah would resurrect him with those who are safe on the Day of Judgement and grant him shade under His Throne *and account him for his deeds, an easy accounting*; and give him his book in his right hand.[146]

6. Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said:

مَنْ قَرَأَ سُوْرَةَ السَّجْدَةِ فِيْ كُلِّ لَيْلَة جُمُعَة اَعْطَاهُ اللهُ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِيْنِهِ **وَلَمْ يُحَاسِبْهُ بِمَا كَانَ مِنْه** وَكَانَ مِنْ رُفَقَاءِ مُحَمّدٍ وَأَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ صَلّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِمْ

Whosoever recites Surat al-Sajdah [chapter 32 of the Qur'an] every eve of Friday, Allah would give him his book in his right hand *and would not*

account him according to the deeds that he has done, and he would be an associate of Muhammad and his progeny (upon whom be peace).[147]

7. Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said:

مَنْ اَتَى قَبْرَ الْحُسَيْنِ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ) تَشَوُّقاً إِلَيْهِ كَتَبَهُ اللهُ مِنَ الآمِنِيْنَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ **وأُعْطِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِيْنِهِ**، وَكَانَ تَحْتَ لِواءِ الْحُسَيْنِ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ) حَتّى يَدْخُل الْجَنّة فَيُسْكِنَهُ فِيْ دَرَجَتِهِ اِنَّ اللهَ عَزِيْزٌ حَكِيْمٌ.

Whosoever comes to the grave of al-Husayn ('a) out of yearning for him, Allah would record him as among those who are safe on the Day of Judgement; *he would be given his book in his right hand* and would be under the banner of al-Husayn ('a) until he enters Paradise, and then Allah will settle him in the level of al-Husayn; indeed Allah is the Invincible and All-Wise.[148]

The word *tashawwuqan* which denotes yearning, and eagerness, should be understood carefully. To have such *shawq* for Imam al-Husayn ('a) springs from knowledge and love of the reality of al-Husayn ('a). Necessarily then, whosoever seeks al-Husayn, seeks utter goodness. In order to verify his contention, he must reflect al-Husayn ('a) in his thoughts and deeds. Otherwise his *shawq* will have little or no meaning.

In order to understand that *shawq* has some important corollaries, observe the following traditions:

أَلاَ وَمَنْ اشْتَاقَ إِلى الْجَنَّةِ سَلاَ عَنِ الشَّهَوَاتِ

Indeed one who craves for Paradise frees himself from mundane desires.[149]

It is narrated in the book *Irshad al-Qulub* that Almighty Allah revealed to Prophet Dawud ('a):

وَمَن اشْتَاقَ إِلى حَبِيْبٍ جَدَّ فِي السَّيْرِ إِلَيْهِ

…And whosoever yearns for a beloved will strive to travel to him…[150]

Here, ‘travelling to a beloved’ does not always mean the physical travel that we commonly conceive. Travelling to our beloved is to traverse the spiritual path of the beloved one. To get near to al-Husayn (‘a) is to embrace his belief, thoughts, words and deeds.

In another tradition, Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) is reported to have said:

اَلْمُشْتَاقُ لاَ يَشْتَهِي طَعَامًا، وَلاَ يَلْتَذُّ بِشَرَابٍ وَلاَ يَسْتَطِيْبُ رُقَادًا، وَلاَ يَأْنَس حَمِيْمًا، وَلاَ يَأْوِي دَارًا، وَلاَ يَسْكُن عُمْرَانًا، وَلاَ يَلْبَس لِيْنًا، وَلاَ يَقِرُّ قَرَارًا، وَيَعْبُدُ اللهَ لَيْلاً وَنَهَارًا، رَاجِيًا أَنْ يَصِيْرَ إِلى مَا اشْتَاقَ إِلَيْهِ

The *yearning one* does not feel like eating any food nor does he derive pleasure from drink, nor does he feel pleasant by sleeping, nor does he gain intimacy with a close friend, nor does he seek shelter in a house, nor does he live for the sake of material prosperity, nor does he wear soft clothes, nor does he establish himself in a place of settlement, and he worships Allah night and day, in hope of reaching the object of his craving.[151]

Then Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) gives the example of Prophet Musa (‘a) on his journey to meet Allah. He narrates the Holy Prophet (s) to have said:

وَفَسَّرَ النَّبِيُّ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ) عَنْ حَالِهِ اَنَّهُ مَا اَكَلَ وَلاَشَرِبَ وَلاَ نَامَ وَلاَ اشْتَهَى شَيْئًا مِنْ ذَلِكَ فِي ذِهَابِهِ وَمَجِيْئِهِ اَرْبَعِيْنَ يَوْمًا شَوْقًا اِلَى رَبِّهِ

And the Prophet (S) explained the state of Musa (‘a) that he neither ate, nor drank, nor slept, nor had the desire of doing anything of the like, while going and coming for forty days, out of yearning for his Lord.[152]

8. Amir al-mu’minin (‘a) is reported to have said:

مَنْ وَقَّرَ مَسْجِدًا لَقَى اللهَ يَوْمَ يَلْقَاهُ ضَاحِكًا مُسْتَبْشِرًا، وَأَعْطَـاهُ كِتَابَـهُ بِيَمِيْنِهِ

Whosoever venerates a mosque, he would meet Allah, the Day when he shall meet Him, in the state of laughter and joy, and Allah would give him his book in his right hand.[153]

Tawqir (veneration) of any mosque is not limited to observing cleanliness therein. It is to give it its due right. Whosoever neighbours a mosque should regularly pray there with concentration and congregation. When he enters the mosque he should observe the two units prayer of *tahiyyah* of the mosque. If he can, he should encourage others to come to the mosque. These are some extensions of *tawqir*.

How to Attain Eternity in Paradise

In several places the Holy Qur'an has described the path to eternal prosperity in the abodes of Paradise. Consider the following verses:

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُـوا الصَّـالِحَاتِ أُولـئِـكَ أَصْـحابُ الْجَنَّـةِ هُـمْ فِيهـا خالِدُونَ

And those who have faith and do righteous deeds, they are the companions of Heaven; *they shall remain in it [forever].* (2:82)

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ابْيَضَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ فَفِي رَحْمَةِ اللهِ هُمْ فِيها خالِدُونَ

But as for those whose faces become bright, they shall dwell in Allah's mercy, *and they will remain in it [forever].* (3:107)

قُلْ أَ أُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِخَيْرٍ مِنْ ذلِكُمْ لِلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهارُ خالِدِينَ فِيها وَأَزْواجٌ مُطَهَّرَةٌ وَرِضْوانٌ مِنَ اللهِ وَاللهُ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبادِ

Say, Shall I inform you of something better than that? For those who are God-wary, there will be near their Lord gardens with streams running in them, *to remain in them [forever],* and chaste mates, and Allah's pleasure. And Allah sees best the servants. (3:15)

وَعَدَ اللهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِناتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهارُ خالِدِينَ فِيها وَمَساكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّاتِ عَدْنٍ وَرِضْوانٌ مِنَ اللهِ أَكْبَرُ ذلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

Allah has promised the faithful, men and women, gardens with streams running in them, *to remain in them [forever]*, and good dwellings in the Gardens of Eden. Yet Allah's pleasure is greater [than all these]; that is the great success. (9:72)

These verses inform us that for one to acquire permanence in Paradise, he must possess two fundamental factors:

1. Belief (*iman*), which is the penetration of knowledge in the heart and its acceptance by the heart).

2. Balanced action (*al-'amal al-salih*), which is free from the two extremes of negligence and extravagance.

The Meaning of al-Yasar in the Supplication

The august Muslim scholar, al-Shaykh Baha' al-Din al-'Amili (d.1031/1622) in his *al-Arba'in,* when discussing the *Wudu'* of Imam 'Ali, explains some phrases of the supplications that the Imam ('a) would recite during *Wudu'*. At one point he opens a discussion under the title of

Tahqiqun fi Kalimat al-Yasar (A research on the word *al-yasar*) and presents four possible meanings of the word *al-yasar* as follows:

1. In the Arabic language, if someone gains something without any difficulty, he says: '*fa'altu-hu bi-yasari* (I did it without difficulty)'. Hence, if we take this meaning in mind, the verse would signify: 'O Allah give me my book of deeds in my right hand and eternity in the abodes of Heaven, without any difficulty'. In other words, one seeks Heaven without being first punished in the Hell-Fire.[154]

2. The preposition *ba'* prefixed in *bi-yasari* denotes *al-sababiyyah* (causation) and the word *yasari* is reckoned as the second term (*mudaf ilayhi*) of the genitive construction *ghasli yasari*, and hence the word *ghasl* (to wash) which is the first term (*mudaf*) of the genitive construction is elliptical and hidden.

Therefore the verse would mean: 'O Allah give me eternity in the Gardens through the washing of my left hand'. In this case, says Shaykh Baha'i, the preposition *ba'* prefixed in *bi-yamini* likewise would be for causation. Shaykh Baha'i regards this possibility as far-fetched.[155]

3. The word *al-khuld* in the phrase '*wa al-khulda fi al-jinani bi- yasari*' is taken as the second term of the genitive construction *bara'at al-khuld*, and the word *bara'at* (lit. guarantee) that is elliptical and hidden serving as its first term (*mudaf*). In reality the verse would read …*wa bara'at al- khuld fi al-jinan*… (and a guarantee of eternity in the gardens of Heaven…). Therefore the supplication would mean: 'O Allah give me my book in my right hand and *a guarantee of* eternity in the abodes of Paradise on my left'. Shaykh Baha'i says: '*wa hadha wajhun qarib* (and this is an almost acceptable possibility).'[156]

4. The word *al-yasar* (ease) here is not the opposite of *al-yamin* (right hand) but the word *al-i'sar* (difficulty). And the meaning of *al-yasar* is *al-yasar bi al-ta'at* (ease in performing actions of obedience). Thus the meaning of the verse would be: 'O Allah give me my book in my right hand and grant me eternity in the gardens of Heaven through the abundance of my acts of obedience'. In this case the preposition *ba* in *bi-yasari* also stands for *al-*

sababiyyah (causation). This opinion, according to Shaykh Baha'i, whilst being far-fetched, is not devoid of subtlety.[157]

Hence, according to Shaykh Baha'i, the first and third aforementioned interpretations are the most probable.

An Easy Reckoning (Hisaban Yasira)

By the phrase '*wa hasibni hisaban yasira*' we are sincerely asking Almighty Allah to account us for our deeds with an easy accounting. The Holy Qur'an clearly tells us that whosoever is among the companions of right hand (*ashab al-yamin*) would surely face an easy reckoning:

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا

Then as to him who is given his book in his right hand, *he shall be reckoned with by an easy reckoning*. (84:7-8)

Insightful scholars have stated in their works that those who deal with others harshly in this world will face a harsh reckoning in the Hereafter. There seems to be an existential effect between the manner in which one deals with others and the manner in which one would eventually be dealt with.

Mulla Sadra (d. 1050/1640) in volume nine of his *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah fi al-Asfar al-'Aqliyyah al-Arba'ah* when explaining the states of different groups in terms of *hisab* (accounting) says:

منهم قوم هم في الحقيقة من أهل الحساب حيث خلطوا عملا صالحا وآخر سيئا فهؤلاء قسمان أحدهما من نوقش في حسابه بكل دقيق وجليل لأنه بهذه المثابة كان في الدنيا وعاشر مع الخلائق وكان يستوفي حقه في المعاملات معهم من غير مسامحة فيعامل معه في الآخرة مثل ما عامل مع الخلق في الدنيا

Among them [those who would be punished] are a community who in reality are among the people of reckoning, for they mixed righteous conduct with other that was evil; and these are two groups: one of them is that which

will be critically dealt with in their accounting for every trivial and significant deed, because this is how they were in this world, and this is how they behaved with the creatures; and they would seek their rights in their dealings with the creatures without any tolerance; and therefore they would be dealt with in the Hereafter in the same manner in which they had dealt with the creatures in this world…[158]

Perhaps the following tradition of Imam ‘Ali (‘a) also alludes to this reality:

كَمَا تَدِيْنُ تُدَان

The way you deal [with others], you shall be dealt with.[159]

A number of our traditions inform us of some of the causes of *easy reckoning*. Consider the following traditions:

1. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

ثَلاَثٌ مَنْ كُنَّ فِيْهِ **حَاسَبَهُ اللهُ حِسَابًا يَسِيْرًا** وَأَدْخَلَهُ الْجَنَّةَ بِرَحْمَتِهِ، قَالُوْا: وَمَا هِيَ يَا رَسُوْلَ اللهِ؟ قَالَ: تُعْطِي مَنْ حَرَمَكَ، وَتَصِلُ مَنْ قَطَعَكَ، وَتَعْفُوْا عَمَّنْ ظَلَمَكَ

There are three things which if a person has, *Allah would account him for his deeds an easy accounting*, and place him in the garden of Heaven by His mercy. They [His companions] said: And what are they, O Apostle of Allah? He (s) said: Giving to one who deprives you, establishing relations with one who severs his relationship with you, and forgiving one who does injustice to you.[160]

2. In a lengthy conversation with one of his companions called Nawf, Imam ‘Ali (‘a) is reported to have said:

يَا نَوْفُ صِلْ رَحِمَك يَزِيْدُ اللهُ فِيْ عُمْرِكَ وَحَسِّنْ خُلْقَكَ **يُخَفِّفَ اللهُ فِيْ حِسَابِكَ**

O Nawf, establish relations with your near ones, and Allah shall increase your life; and beautify your character, and Allah shall account you with an easy accounting…[161]

3. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

بِرُّ الْوَالِدَيْنِ، وَصِلَةُ الرَّحِمِ، **تُهَوِّنَانِ الْحِسَابَ**

Doing good to one's parents and establishing relations with one's near ones, *make easy the reckoning [of the Day of Judgement]*.[162]

4. Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said:

إِنَّ صَدَقَةَ اللَّيْلِ تُطْفِئُ غَضَبَ الرَّبِّ وَتَمْحُوا الذَّنْبَ الْعَظِيْمَ **وَتُهَوِّنُ الْحِسَابَ**

Indeed giving charity (*sadaqah*) at night extinguishes the anger of the Lord and erases the great sins *and makes easy the reckoning [of the Day of Judgement]*.[163]

5. Ishaq ibn 'Ammar says: I heard Imam al-Sadiq ('a) saying:

إِنَّ صِلَةَ الرَّحِمِ وَالْبِرَّ **لَيُهَوِّنَانِ الْحِسَابَ** وَيَعْصِمَانِ مِنَ الذُّنُوْبِ، فَصِلُوْا أَرْحَامَكُمْ وَبَرُّوْا بِإِخْوَانِكُمْ وَلَوْ بِحُسْنِ السَّلَامِ وَرَدِّ الْجَوَابِ

Surely *silat al-rahim* and acts of virtue *make easy the reckoning (al-hisab)* and protect one from sins; therefore establish relations with your near ones and perform deeds of virtue to your brothers in faith, even if it be by greeting with 'Salam', and responding to the same.[164]

6. Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said:

مَنْ زَارَ قَبْرَ أَمِيْرِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ عَارِفًا بِحَقِّهِ غَيْرَ مُتَجَبِّرٍ وَلاَ مُتَكَبِّرٍ كَتَبَ اللهُ لَهُ أَجْرَ مِائَةَ أَلْفِ شَهِيْدٍ، وَغَفَرَ اللهُ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ، وَبُعِثَ مِنَ الآمِنِيْنَ، **وَهُوِّنَ عَلَيْهِ الْحِسَابُ**، وَاسْتَقْبَلَتْهُ الْمَلاَئِكَةُ، فَإِذَا انْصَرَفَ شَيَّعَتْهُ إِلَى مَنْزِلِهِ، فَإِنْ مَرِضَ عَادُوْهُ، وَإِنْ مَاتَ شَيَّعُوْهُ بِالاِسْتِغْفَارِ إِلَى قَبْرِهِ

Whosoever visits the grave of Amir al-mu'minin ('a), while he knows the Imam's station, and is neither arrogant nor proud, Allah will write for him the reward of a hundred thousand martyrs, and will forgive him for his past and future sins, and he will be resurrected among the protected ones, *and his accounting would be made easy for him*, and the angels will welcome him, and when he will leave [the radiant grave], they will accompany him until his house, and if he gets sick, they will visit him, and if he dies, they will accompany his body until his grave while seeking for his forgiveness.[165]

7. In a lengthy tradition, Hadrat Fatimah al-Zahra' ('a) asks her noble father (s) about the consequences of one who takes prayer lightly, and he (s) enumerates fifteen evil consequences. Of the consequences that such a person would face on the Day of Judgement is:

يُحَاسِبُهُ **حِسَابًا** شَدِيْدًا

He [Allah] would account him [for his deeds], a difficult accounting.[166]

8. Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said regarding silence:

وَهُوَ مِفْتَاحُ كُلِّ رَاحَةٍ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ، وَفِيْهِ رِضَاءُ الرَّبِّ، **وَتَخْفِيْفُ الْحِسَابِ**

And it [silence] is the key to every ease in this world and the Hereafter, and in it is the good pleasure of the Lord *and the simplification of the accounting [of the Judgement Day]*.

9. In a lengthy sacred tradition (al-*hadith* al-qudsi) narrated from the Holy Prophet (s), Allah is narrated to have said:

فَإِذَا قَالَ: (مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ)، قَـالَ اللهُ جَـلَّ جَـلاَلُهُ: أُشْـهِدُكُمْ كَمَـا اعْتَرَفَ أَنِّيْ أَنـاَ مَالِـكُ يَـوْمِ الدِّيْـنِ **لأُسَـهِّلَنَّ يَـوْمَ الْحِسَـابِ حِسَـابَهُ** وَلأَتَجَاوَزَنَّ عَنْ سَيِّئَاتِهِ...

…And when he [My servant] says: *Maliki yawm al-Din* (Owner of the Day of Judgement), Allah says: I take you [the angels] as My witness, that the way he confessed that indeed I am the Owner of the Day of Judgement, *I will certainly make his reckoning easy on the Day of Reckoning* and will certainly overlook his misdeeds…[167]

10. In a lengthy tradition, the Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said to Abu Dharr:

يَا أَبَا ذَرّ، حَاسِبْ نَفْسَكَ قَبْلَ أَنْ تُحَاسَبْ، **فَإِنَّهُ أَهْوَنُ لِحِسَابِكَ** غَدًا

O Aba Dharr, account yourself before you are accounted [for your deeds], *because it is easier for your reckoning tomorrow*.[168]

Therefore, we must always try to perform those deeds that would facilitate an easy reckoning (*hisaban yasiran*). Indeed, washing the right hand does have an existential effect and would engender spiritual change in us, but that in itself is not enough. We must also seek the causes that would change us to ensure an easy reckoning when we arrive at the Reckoning Arena.

The Meaning of Washing The Hand

'Hand (*yad*)' in the Arabic language signifies power and action.

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said:

وَالْيَدُ اَلْقُوَّةُ، وَلَيْسَ حَيْثُ تَذْهَبُ الْمُشَبِّهَة

…And hand denotes strength, but not as the *mushabbiha* (anthropomorphists) believe…[169]

Washing the right hand, besides giving interior purity, should enable one to firmly resolve to perform acts of purity. Whatever action contradicts the laws of Allah is dirt. Hence when washing the right hand one should make a promise never to perform any deed that taints one's hand. In a well-known tradition mentioned by experts of Islamic law, Imam al-Rida ('a) alludes to the fact that washing the hand actually accords one 'the spiritual purity of the hand'. Hence there is a direct link between one's exterior and interior. The tradition is as follows:

عَنْ مُحَمّد بْنِ سِنَان اَنَّ اَبَا الْحَسَن الرِّضَا (عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ) كَتَبَ إِلَيْهِ فِيْ جَوَابِ كِتَابِهِ اَنَّ عِلَّةَ الْوُضُوْءِ الَّتِيْ مِنْ اَجْلِهَا صَارَ غَسْلُ الْوَجْهِ وَالذِّرَاعَيْنِ وَمَسْحُ الرَّأْسِ وَالرِّجْلَيْنِ فَلِقِيَامِهِ بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللهِ تَعَالَى وَاسْتِقْبَالِهِ اِيَّاهُ بِجَوَارِحِهِ الظَّاهِرَةِ وَمُلاَقَاتِهِ بِهَا الْكِرَامَ الْكَاتِبِيْنَ فَغَسْلُ الْوَجْهِ لِلسُّجُوْدِ وَالْخُضُوْعِ وَغَسْلُ الْيَدَيْنِ لِيُقَلِّبَهُمَا وَيَرْغَبَ بِهِمَا وَيَرْهَبَ وَيَتَبَتَّلَ وَمَسْحُ الرَّأْسِ وَالْقَدَمَيْنِ لاَنَّهُمَا ظَاهِرَانِ مَكْشُوْفَانِ مُسْتَقْبَلٍ بِهِمَا فِيْ كُلِّ حَالاَتِهِ وَلَيْسَ فِيْهَا مِنَ الْخُضُوْعِ وَالتَّبَتُّلِ مَا فِي الْوَجْهِ وَالذِّرَاعَيْنِ

Muhammad ibn Sinan reports that Abu al-Hasan al-Rida ('a) wrote to him in response to his letter, that the reason behind *Wudu'*, due to which it was necessary to wash the face and the two forearms, and to wipe the head and two feet, is because the servant would thereby stand before Allah and pay attention to Him by those members of his body which are apparent, and [also] because he would encounter the *Kiram al-Katibin* (the Noble Recorders of deeds among the angels) through them; therefore, washing of the face is for [purification before] prostration (*sujud*) and [expression of] humility (*khudu'*), and washing the two forearms is [to make them clean]

for moving/turning them and expressing desire, fear, and devotion through them, and wiping the head and the two feet is because they are apparent and uncovered and face forward in every situation of the praying one, and they do not have the same humility and devotion as that of the face and the two forearms.[170]

This tradition is clear about the effect of the external cleaning in the human being. Likewise, in a lengthy tradition where a Jew asks some questions to the Holy Prophet (s), the following conversation is recorded:

فَمَا جَزَاءُ عَامِلِهَا؟ قَالَ النَّبِيّ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ): أَوّل مَا يَمُسّ الْمَاءَ يَتَبَاعَدُ عَنْهُ الشَّيْطَانُ، فَإِذَا تَمَضْمَضَ نَوَّرَ اللهُ قَلْبَهُ وَلِسَانَهُ بِالْحِكْمَةِ، فَإِذَا اِسْتَنْشَقَ آمَنَهُ اللهُ مِنَ النَّارِ وَرَزَقَهُ رَائِحَةَ الْجَنَّةِ، فَإِذَا غَسَلَ وَجْهَهُ بَيَّضَ اللهُ وَجْهَهُ يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ فِيْهِ وُجُوْهٌ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوْهٌ، وَإِذَا غَسَلَ سَاعِدَيْهِ حَرَّمَ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ أَغْلاَلَ النَّارِ، وَإِذَا مَسَحَ رَأْسَهُ مَسَحَ اللهُ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ، وَإِذَا مَسَحَ قَدَمَيْهِ أَجَازَهُ اللهُ عَلَى الصِّرَاطِ يَوْمَ تَزِلُّ فِيْهِ الأَقْدَامُ

…[The Jew asks:] And what is the reward of one who does it [*Wudu'*]? The Prophet (s) said: The first time that one touches water, Satan distances himself from him, and when he gargles, Allah illuminates his heart and his tongue with wisdom, and when he washes his nose, Allah protects him from Hell-Fire and bestows him with the fragrance of Paradise, and when he washes his face, Allah brightens his face on the day when some faces are bright and some faces dark; and when he washes his two forearms, Allah exempts him from the chains of the Hell-Fire; and when he wipes his head, Allah wipes off his misdeeds; and when he wipes his two feet Allah permits him to cross the bridge, on the day that some feet will slip…[171]

However, as we said earlier, *Wudu'* should transport us to a higher ambition: resolution to stop deeds that are contradictory to Allah's pleasure.

The frequency of *Wudu'* coupled with contemplation can surely bring about this change. We should therefore never be in the state of oblivion (*ghaflah*) and absent- mindedness when performing *Wudu'*.

Our Aim Should Be Yadullah

In the previous chapter, we had discussed a station where the servant becomes a representative of Allah. Allah sees through him, speaks through him, and attends to others through him, and does things through him. Obviously, as we said, this does not mean that Allah needs him because he himself is Allah's very action or manifestation. Therefore need is not there at all. Such people in the terminology of the mystical scholars (*'urafa'*) are in the station of *al-baqa'u bi Allah ba'd al-fana'* (subsistence by Allah after dissolution).

Our Infallible Imams ('a) were true representatives of Allah. Whatever they did was according to Allah's pleasure. It is perhaps because of this that they were called *yadullah* (hand of God). Observe the following narrations:

1. Hashim ibn Abu 'Ammar is reported to have said:

سَمِعْتُ اَمِيْرَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ يَقُوْلُ: اَنَا عَيْنُ اللهِ وَاَنَا يَدُ اللهِ

I heard Amir al-mu'minin ('a) saying: I am the eye of Allah (*'aynullah*), and I am the hand of Allah (*yadullah*)…[172]

2. Aswad ibn Sa'id says: I was with Abu Ja'far ('a), and he spoke without me asking anything from him, he said:

نَحْنُ حُجَّةُ اللهِ، وَنَحْنُ بَـابُ اللهِ، وَنَحْـنُ لِسَـانُ اللهِ، وَنَحْـنُ وَجْـهُ اللهِ، وَنَحْنُ عَيْنُ اللهِ فِيْ خَلْقِهِ

We are the proof of Allah, and we are the door of Allah, and we are the tongue of Allah, and we are the face of Allah, and we are the eye of Allah in His creation…[173]

CHAPTER 5

Appreciating the Secrets of Wudu'

On Washing the Left Hand

CHAPTER 5

On Washing the Left Hand
(*Ghasl al-Yad al-Yusra*)

Amir al-mu'minin ('a) teaches his son Muhammad ibn Hanafiyyah to recite the following supplication while washing the left hand in *Wudu'*:

اَللَّهُمَّ لاَ تُعْطِنِيْ كِتَابِيْ بِشِمَالِيْ وَلاَ مِنْ وَرَاءِ ظَهْرِيْ وَلاَ تَجْعَلْهَا مَغْلُوْلَةً إِلَى عُنُقِيْ وَاَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ مُقَطَّعَاتِ النِّيْرَانِ

O Allah, do not give my book of deeds in my left hand, nor from behind my back, nor chain it to my neck, and I seek refuge in You from the clothes of the Hell-Fire.

A Word on Shimal

It should be noted that although the shimal mentioned in the above supplication literally means left hand, it denotes a higher meaning than that, and in reality it does not mean one's left hand. This is because both the hands of a believer are *yamin* (always prosperous). The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said about Allah that:

وَكِلْتَا يَدَيْهِ يَمِيْنٌ

And both His [Allah's] hands are *yamin* [prosperous].[174]

This dictum is also true with regard to one who reflects the attributes of Allah, i.e. a true faithful believer. Therefore we say:

وكِلْتَا يَدَيْ الْمُؤْمِنِ يَمِيْنٌ

Both of the hands of a believer are *yamin* [prosperous].

An Allusion to the Kernel of Yamin

Some gnostics[175] however say that the spiritual *yamin* (right hand) is the practical intellect (*al-'aql al-'amali*), which is referred to in the following well-known tradition of Imam al-Sadiq ('a) as follows:

مَا عُبِدَ بِهِ الرَّحْمَانُ وَاكْتُسِبَ بِهِ الْجِنَانُ

That by which the All-Beneficent is obeyed and stations of Paradise are attained.[176]

To understand the practical intellect, consider the following exposition:

According to one opinion, the intellect (the faculty of comprehension) is classified in terms of the purpose of comprehension into two categories:

(a) Theoretical intellect (*al-'aql al-nazari*): This is when the purpose of comprehension is knowledge and not action, such as comprehending the realities of existence.

(b) Practical intellect (*al-'aql al-'amali*): This is when the purpose of comprehension is action, such as knowledge of the beauty of justice and the ugliness of oppression, the beauty of patience and the ugliness of impatience, etc.

Authoritative scholars like Avicenna (d. 428/1037), however, define the two kinds of intellect in a different way:

- Theoretical intellect (*al-'aql al-nazari*): This is the faculty of comprehension of realities, irrespective of whether the purpose of comprehension is knowledge or action.

- Practical intellect (*al-'aql al-'amali*): This is the faculty of motivations and not comprehensions.

Ayatullah Muhammadi Rayshahri (b. 1946) in *his al-‘Aql wa al- Jahl fi al-Kitab wa al-Sunnah* says:

أقول: النظرية الأولى أقرب إلى معنى كلمة العقل، والأصح هو تفسير العقل العملي بمبدأ الإدراك والحفز وذلك لأن الشعور الذي يتعاطى مع القيم الأخلاقية والعملية هو مبدأ الإدراك ، وهو في الوقت ذاته مبدأ للدفع والحفز

In my view the first opinion is closer to the meaning of the word ‘*aql*. However, the most correct opinion is the interpretation of practical intellect (*al-‘aql al-‘amali*) as [both] the source of comprehension as well as motivation. This is because the perception that is in harmony with ethical and practical values is the source of comprehension and at the same time the source of motivation.[177]

An Allusion to the Kernel of Shimal

The spiritual *shimal* (left hand), however, is the human *tab*‘ (material nature). Mulla Hadi Sabzawari in his *Nibras al-Huda* says:

شِمَالُكَ الطَّبْعُ وَهَذَا مَشْأَمَة

Your left hand is the material self and this is *mash’amah*.[178]

Those who have developed attachment to the material world and have contented themselves with it and do not aspire for higher levels of existence are the *ashab al-shimal* (companions of the left hand).

Hence, in order for us not to be among the ashab al-shimal, we should try to free ourselves from worldly attachments and elevate our spirits to the higher levels of human existence.

The Holy Qur’an informs:

وَأَصْحابُ الشِّمَالِ ما أَصْحابُ الشِّمَالِ. فِيْ سَمُومٍ وَحَمِيْمٍ. وَ ظِلٍّ مِنْ يَحْمُومٍ. لاَ بَارِدٍ وَلا كَرِيمٍ. إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُتْرَفِينَ. وَكَانُوا يُصِرُّوْنَ عَلَى الْحِنثِ الْعَظِيمِ. وَكَانُوا يَقُولُونَ أَئِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظَامًا أَئِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ. أَوَ آبَاؤُنَا الأَوَّلُونَ

And the people of the left hand what are the people of the left hand? Amid infernal miasma and boiling water; and the shadow of a dense black smoke, neither cool nor beneficial. Indeed they had been plentifully indulgent in the blessings of this world before this, and they used to persist in the great sin. And they used to say, 'What! When we are dead and become dust and bones, shall we be resurrected? And our forefathers too?' (56:41-48)

In brief, the reasons that led a group of people to end up being the *ashab al-shimal* are as follows:

i- They were *mutrafin: Lisan al-'Arab* translates *al-mutraf* as:

الـمُتْرَفُ: الـمُتَنَعِّمُ الـمُتَوَسِّعُ في مَلاذِّ الدنيا وشَهواتِها

Al-mutraf: one who enjoys in plenty the pleasures of the world and its desires.

والـمُتْرَفُ: الذي قد أَبْطَرَتْه النعمةُ وسِعَةُ العَيْشِ

And *al-mutraf* is one whom blessings and plentifulness and easiness of life have led to exult and behave unthankfully.

ii- They persisted in great sin

iii- They rejected the Day of Resurrection

All these are elements that darken the heart and lead one to the abyss of spiritual wretchedness.

In a lengthy tradition narrated from Imam al-Baqir ('a), the following conversation is mentioned between Prophet Musa ('a) and Almighty Allah:

إِلهِي فَمَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ لَمْ يَكُفْ عَنْ مَعَاصِيْكَ؟ قَالَ يَا مُـوْسى **أُعْطِيْـهِ كِتَابَهُ بِشِمَالِهِ مِنْ وَرَاءِ ظَهْرِهِ**

O Allah, and what is the recompense of one who does not refrain from sins? He said: O Musa, *I would give him his book in his left hand, from behind his back*.[179]

In another tradition Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said:

وَالْكِتَابُ اَلاِمَامُ، فَمَنْ نَبَذَهُ وَرَاءَ ظَهْرِهِ كَانَ كَمَا قَالَ (فَنَبَذُوْهُ وَرَاءَ ظُهُوْرِهِمْ) **وَمَنْ اَنْكَرَهُ كَانَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الشِّمَالِ** الَّذِيْنَ قَالَ اللهُ: (مَا اَصْحَابُ الشِّمَالِ فِيْ سَمُوْمٍ وَحَمِيْمٍ وَظِلٍّ مِنْ يَحْمُوْمٍ)...

The Book is the Imam; then whosoever throws it behind his back he is as Allah says: '…they cast it behind their backs.' (3:187). And whosoever rejects him *is from the companions of the left hand*, about whom Allah says: '…what are the people of the left hand? Amid infernal miasma and boiling water and the shadow of a dense black smoke…' (56:41-43)[180]

This tradition highlights the importance of the infallible leader who ensures that one's beliefs and actions are according to the truth. Those who intentionally desert the Imam would certainly end up being amongst the *ashab al-shimal*.

What does Muqatta'at al-Niran Signify?

The Holy Qur'an says:

هَذَانِ خَصْمَانِ اخْتَصَمُوا فِي رَبِّهِمْ فَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا قُطِّعَتْ لَهُـمْ ثِيَـابٌ مِّن نَّار يُصَبُّ مِن فَوْقِ رُؤُوسِهِمُ الْحَمِيمُ...

These two contenders contend concerning their Lord. As for those who are faithless, cloths of fire will be cut out for them, and boiling water will be poured over their heads… (22:19)

Explaining this verse, Ibn ‘Abbas translated the phrase *muqatta‘at al-niran as al-thiyab al-qisar* (short clothes) of Hell- Fire.[181]

Amin al-Islam Shaykh al-Tabarsi (d. 548/1153) in his *Tafsir Jawami‘ al-Jami*‘ explaining the phrase ‘*wa qutti‘at lahum thiyabun min nar*’ says:

أي ألبسوا **مقطّعات النّيران**، وهي الثّياب القصار، كأنّه - سبحانه - يقدّر لهم نيرانا على مقادير جثثهم كما يقطّع الثّياب الملبوسة

It means that they will be made to wear *muqatta‘at al-niran* which are short pieces of clothes. It is as if He - the Glorified - apportions for them fire in proportion to their bodies, the way garments are normally cut [to be worn].[182]

Shaykh Abu Ja‘far al-Tusi (d. 460/1068) in his *Tafsir al-Tibyan* explaining the same verse, says:

قُطِّعَتْ لَهُمْ ثِيابٌ مِنْ نارٍ ومعناه إن النار تحيط بهم كاحاطة الثياب التي يلبسونها

Cloths of fire will be cut out for them: It means that fire will encompass them in the way the clothes that they wear cover them.[183]

Therefore for those who reject Allah’s lordship will be cut out clothes of fire. It is from this very situation that we seek refuge when we pray ‘…*And I seek refuge in You from the clothes of the Hell- Fire.*’

In a tradition from Imam al-Baqir (‘a),[184] we are told that the disbelievers in the phrase ‘…*fa alladhina kafaru* (As for those who disbelieve)’ (22:19) refer to those who disbelieve in the guardianship of Imam ‘Ali (‘a). Hence in order to practically be emancipated from garments of fire one must adhere to the *wilayah* of Amir al-mu’minin (‘a), which in reality is the intact transfer of the religion of Islam and that which Allah is pleased with.

CHAPTER 6

Appreciating the Secrets of Wudu'

On Wiping the Head

CHAPTER 6

On Wiping the Head
(Mash al-Ra’s)

Amir al-mu’minin (‘a) teaches his son Muhammad ibn Hanafiyyah to recite the following supplication while wiping the front part of the head in *Wudu’*:

أَللَّهُمَّ غَشِّنِيْ بِرَحْمَتِكَ وَبَرَكَاتِكَ وَعَفْوِكَ

O Allah, cover me completely with Your mercy, Your abundant good and Your pardon.

In order to know this supplication better, it is important for us to know the root meaning of the words employed in it.

Describing the etymological root of the imperative verb *ghashshi-ni* which means ‘cover me’, Ibn Faris (d. 395/1004) says:

يدل على تغطية شيء بشيء

It signifies covering something with something.[185]

Al-Mustafawi, one of the authoritative lexicographers, in his Qur’anic lexicon *al-Tahqiq fi Kalimat al-Qur’an al-Karim*, has a subtler definition to convey. He defines the root *ghayn.shin.ya’* as follows:

أنّ الأصل الواحد في المادّة: هو ستر حتّى يستولى به ويحلّ فيه، وبهذه القيود تتميّز

من موادّ الستر والتغطية والمواراة وغيرها

The single origin of the trilateral root [*ghayn.shin.ya*] is to cover [something] until it overwhelms it and penetrates it; and by these conditions

it becomes distinct from the roots of *al-satr, al-taghtiyah, al-muwarat*, and others [which all reveal the sense of covering but are different].[186]

Hence, we are asking Allah to *drench and soak* us with His mercy. This mercy, however, is His specific mercy (*al-rahmah al-khassah*). For everything, inasmuch as it exists already, enjoys and will always enjoy the universal divine mercy (*al-rahmah al-'ammah*), about which Allah says:

...وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ...

…but My mercy *embraces all things*… (7:156)

His special angels - the bearers of the Throne (*hamalat al-'arsh*) - also address Him, saying:

...رَبَّنا وَسِعْتَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ رَحْمَةً وَعِلْماً...

…'Our Lord! *You encompass all things in mercy* and knowledge…' (40:7)

Note that in both the above cases divine mercy is said to encompass everything. Thus when we seek divine mercy in the supplication under discussion, we are seeking another kind of mercy, which is special.

The Holy Qur'an also introduces the universal divine mercy as *al-rahmah al-rahmaniyyah* or *al-rahmah al-wasi'ah*, and the special divine mercy as *al-rahmah al-rahimiyyah*. Both these kinds of mercy appear in the *basmalah* - the first verse of every chapter save the ninth chapter (Surat al-Tawbah) of the Holy Qur'an. When we therefore say '*Bi ismi Allah al-Rahman al-Rahim'*, the name *al-Rahman* signifies the all-embracing mercy of Allah, whereas the name *al-Rahim* denotes His special mercy, which according to some *hadiths*, is specific to the faithful. It is important to know however that although Allah bestows this special mercy to everyone, only the *mu'minun* (faithful believers) have the receptivity to accept and benefit from it. Examples of this specific mercy are: divine forgiveness, higher degrees of faith, love for Allah, exemplification of the sublime attributes of Allah, fear of Allah, freedom from sin, garden of Paradise, etc. Alluding to this mercy, Allah says:

إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ مِيقاتُهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ. يَوْمَ لا يُغْنِي مَوْلًى عَنْ مَوْلًى شَيْئاً وَلا هُمْ يُنْصَرُونَ. **إِلاَّ مَنْ رَحِمَ اللهُ** إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيم

Indeed the Day of Judgement is the tryst for them all, the day when a friend will not avail a friend in any way, nor will they be helped, *except for he on whom Allah has mercy*. Indeed He is the All-Mighty, the All-Merciful. (44:40-42)

أَللَّهُمَّ غَشِّنِيْ بِرَحْمَتِكَ **وَبَرَكَاتِكَ** وَعَفْوِكَ

O Lord! Cover me completely with Your mercy, *Your abundant grace* and Your forgiveness.

Another important thing that we are asking Allah is to cover us with His *barakat* (abundant good). The word *barakah* signifies two important meanings: abundance of good and permanence. We are thus seeking such grace from Allah that is abundant and lasting.

One of the appropriate extensions for abundance that relates to the mind of the human being is wisdom (*hikmah*), which Allah calls *khayran kathiran* (abundant good). The Holy Qur'an says:

يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَشاءُ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْراً كَثِيراً وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلاَّ أُولُوا الْأَلْبابِ

He gives wisdom to whomever He wishes, and he who is given wisdom, is certainly given an abundant good (*khayran kathiran*). But none takes admonition except those who possess intellect. (2:269)

The Holy Qur'an has also spoken about elements that can result in *barakat* (abundant good). The following are examples worthy of consideration:

1. God-Wariness Brings About Abundant Good:

The Holy Qur'an says:

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرى آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَفَتَحْنا عَلَيْهِمْ بَرَكاتٍ مِنَ السَّماءِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلٰكِنْ كَذَّبُوا فَأَخَذْناهُمْ بِما كانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

If the people of the towns *had been faithful and God-wary, We would have opened to them abundant good from the heaven and the earth*. But they denied; so We seized them because of what they used to earn. (7:96)

Here *taqwa* and God-wariness is introduced as the cause of abundant good. Note that the word *barakat* in the above verse is conditioned with *min al-sama'i wa al-ard* which means that if the people were to be God-wary, Allah will not only bestow on them the abundant good of the earth, but also of the heavens. In simpler words, not only would one benefit from material blessings, but also from spiritual blessings.

In a tradition from Imam al-Rida ('a), obedience, which is actually the result of *taqwa*, is also introduced as an element of *barakah* and abundant good. He ('a) is reported to have said:

أَوْحَى اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ إِلَى نَبِيٍّ مِنْ الأَنْبِيَاءِ: إِذَا أَطَعْتَ رَضِيْتُ، وَإِذَا رَضِيْتُ بَارَكْتُ، وَلَيْسَ لِبَرَكَتِيْ نِهَايَةٌ

Allah, the Invincible and Majestic, revealed to a prophet among the Prophets: When you observe obedience, I am pleased, and when I am pleased, I bestow abundance, and there is no limit to My abundance.

2. Gratitude Brings About Abundant Good:

The Holy Qur'an says:

وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذابِي لَشَدِيدٌ

And when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are thankful, I will surely enhance you [in My favours], but if you are unthankful, My punishment is indeed

severe.' (14:7)

Here *shukr*, which is to thank Allah for His blessings, is introduced as an element of increment (*ziyadah*), and thus abundance (*barakat*). The word *shukr* however must be understood in its literal sense, which signifies *kashf* (to unravel). In employing the divine bounties for the purpose of their creation, we are actually unravelling them as real bounties and favours.

Defining the reality of *shukr*, 'Allamah Tabataba'i says in his *al-Mizan*:

وحقيقة الشكر إظهار النعمة كما أن الكفر الذي يقابله هو إخفاؤها والستر

عليها، وإظهار النعمة هو استعمالها في محلها الذي أراده منعمها وذكر المنعم بها

لسانا وهو الثناء و قلبا من غير نسيان

The reality of *shukr* is to manifest the bounty in the same way as *kufr*, which is its opposite, means hiding and covering the same; and to manifest the bounty means to employ it in the place where its Giver intended, and to remember the Giver of the bounty through the tongue which is to praise Him and through the heart, without forgetfulness.[187]

3. Seeking Divine Forgiveness Brings About Abundant Good

The Holy Qur'an quotes Prophet Hud ('a) to have said to his people:

وَيا قَوْمِ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُرْسِلِ السَّماءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْراراً

وَيَزِدْكُمْ قُوَّةً إِلى قُوَّتِكُمْ وَلا تَتَوَلَّوْا مُجْرِمينَ

'O my people! Plead with your Lord for forgiveness, then turn to Him penitently: He will send copious rains for you from the sky, and add power to your [present] power. So do not turn your backs [on Him] as guilty ones.' (11:52)

Prophet Nuh ('a), addressing Allah, tells Him what he had advised his people:

فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كانَ غَفَّاراً. يُرْسِلِ السَّماءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْراراً. وَيُمْدِدْكُمْ بِأَمْوالٍ وَ بَنِينَ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ أَنْهاراً

'…telling [them]: Plead to your Lord for forgiveness. Indeed He is the All-Forgiving. He will send for you abundant rains from the sky, and aid you with wealth and sons, and provide you with gardens and provide you with streams.' (71:10-12)

In the above verses from chapter Hud ('a) and chapter Nuh ('a), seeking forgiveness is introduced as an element of abundance. Hence it alludes to the fact that sin and sinfulness is a state that calls for deprivation and destitution.

If we carefully consider all the above three verses that speak about causes of abundance we will come to realise that the crux of all of them is obedience and submission. One who is truly submissive to Allah will enjoy the abundance of the world and the Hereafter. Hence, as we recite this supplication and seek the abundant grace of Allah, we must resolve to be submissive to Him and entirely obedient to His commands.

أَللَّهُمَّ غَشِّنِيْ بِرَحْمَتِكَ وَبَرَكَاتِكَ **وَعَفْوِكَ**

O Lord! Cover me completely with Your mercy, Your abundant grace and *Your forgiveness*.

The third thing we ask Allah when we recite this supplication is His forgiveness and pardon. The word '*afw* in the phrase *'wa 'afwika'* signifies divine pardon. Lexicographers such as al-Isfahani allude to the fact that '*afw* is 'to take away the sin and its effects'.

In the prophetic tradition we quoted much earlier, wiping of the head was said to clear off one's misdeeds. The Holy Prophet (s) said:

وَإِذَا مَسَحَ رَأْسَهُ مَسَحَ اللهُ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ

And when he wipes his head Allah wipes off his misdeeds.[188]

Although the existential and ontological effect of wiping one's head is the effacement of one's *sayyi'at* (ugly deeds), when we wipe our heads in *Wudu'* we must firmly resolve to seek forgiveness for our misdeeds and also *seek the causes* that efface them. The Holy Qur'an and the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) mention the factors and causes that can erase one's misdeeds. Consider the following examples:

1. Belief and Balanced Action:

The Holy Qur'an says:

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَحْسَنَ الَّذِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

As for those who have faith and do righteous deeds, We will absolve them of their misdeeds and We will surely reward them by the best of what they used to do. (29:7)

And in chapter 64, verse 9 it says:

يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُكُمْ لِيَوْمِ الْجَمْعِ ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ التَّغَابُنِ وَمَن يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا يُكَفِّرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ وَيُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

The day when He will gather you for the Day of Gathering, that will be a day of dispossession. And *whoever has faith in Allah and acts righteously, He shall absolve him of his misdeeds* and admit him into gardens with streams running in them, to remain in them forever. That is the great success. (64:9)

Here it is important to note the following:

a) Faith (*iman*) is not mere knowledge (‘*ilm*), but rather a knot of belief (‘*aqidah*) in the heart of the faithful that naturally leads one to action (‘*amal*).

b) Although ‘*amal salih* is commonly rendered as ‘good action’, its accurate definition is ‘balanced action’, an action that is free from the two extremes of extravagance (*ifrat*) and negligence (*tafrit*).

2. Sincere Penitence:

The Holy Qur’an says:

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسَانًا حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ كُرْهًا وَوَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهًا
وَحَمْلُهُ وَفِصَالُهُ ثَلَاثُونَ شَهْرًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَبَلَغَ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً قَالَ
رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ
أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَصْلِحْ لِي فِي ذُرِّيَّتِي **إِنِّي تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَإِنِّي مِنَ**
الْمُسْلِمِينَ. أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ نَتَقَبَّلُ عَنْهُمْ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا وَنَتَجَاوَزُ عَنْ
سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ فِي أَصْحَابِ الْجَنَّةِ وَعْدَ الصِّدْقِ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ

We have enjoined man to be kind to his parents. His mother has carried him in travail, and bore him in travail, and his gestation and weaning take thirty months. When he comes of age and reaches forty years, he says, ‘My Lord! Inspire me to give thanks for Your blessing with which You have blessed me and my parents, and that I may do righteous deeds which may please You, and invest my descendants with righteousness. *Indeed I have turned to you in penitence, and I am one of the muslims.’ Such are the ones from whom We accept the best of what they do, and overlook their misdeeds*, [who will be] among the inhabitants of paradise - a true promise which they had been given. (46:15-16)

And in chapter 66, verse 8 it says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا تُوبُوا إِلَى اللهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوحًا عَسَى رَبُّكُمْ أَن يُكَفِّرَ عَنكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيُدْخِلَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ يَوْمَ لَا يُخْزِي اللهُ النَّبِيَّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ نُورُهُمْ يَسْعَى بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَتْمِمْ لَنَا نُورَنَا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

O you who have faith! Repent to Allah with sincere repentance! Maybe your Lord will absolve you of your misdeeds and admit you into gardens with streams running in them, on the day when God will not let the Prophet down and the faithful who are with him. Their light will move swiftly before them and on their right. They will say, ‘Our Lord! Perfect our light for us, and forgive us! Indeed You have power over all things.’ (66:8)

3. Charity in Secret:

The Holy Qur’an says:

إِن تُبْدُواْ الصَّدَقَاتِ فَنِعِمَّا هِيَ وَإِن تُخْفُوهَا وَتُؤْتُوهَا الْفُقَرَاء فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لُّكُمْ **وَيُكَفِّرُ عَنكُم مِّن سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ** وَاللهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

If you disclose your charities, that is well, but if you hide them and give them to the poor, that is better for you, and *it will atone for some of your misdeeds*, and Allah is well aware of what you do. (2:271)

4. Abstaining from Major Sins:

The Holy Qur’an says:

إِن تَجْتَنِبُواْ كَبَآئِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ **نُكَفِّرْ عَنكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ** وَنُدْخِلْكُم مُّدْخَلاً كَرِيمًا

If you avoid the major sins that you are forbidden, *We will absolve you of your misdeeds*, and admit you to a noble abode. (4:31)

5. Observing God-wariness:

The Holy Qur'an says:

يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ إَن تَتَّقُواْ اللّهَ يَجْعَل لَّكُمْ فُرْقَاناً وَيُكَفِّرْ عَنكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

O you who have faith! If you are wary of Allah, He shall appoint a criterion for you, *and absolve you of your misdeeds, and forgive you*, for Allah is dispenser of great grace. (8:29)

And in chapter 65, verse 5 it says:

...وَمَن يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يُكَفِّرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ وَيُعْظِمْ لَهُ أَجْرًا

…and whoever is wary of Allah, *He shall absolve him of his misdeeds* and give him a great reward. (65:5)

6. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

إِجَابَةُ الْمُؤَذِّنِ كَفَّارَةُ الذُّنُوْبِ

Responding to the call of the *mu'adhhin* (caller to prayer) expiates one's sins.

A Deeper Consideration

The eminent mystic Sayyid Haydar Amuli (d. after 787/1385) in his *Inner Secrets of the Path* says:

مسح الرأس عبارة عن تنزيه سره وتقديس باطنه الذي هو الرأس الحقيقي عن دنس الأنانية وحدث الغيرية الحاجب والحاجز بينه وبين محبوبه

Wiping over the head is to purify one's secret and to divest one's innermost heart, which is the real head from the taint of I-ness and otherness, which acts as a barrier between him and his Beloved.

Actually when one seeks to be fully covered with divine mercy, one should opt for a very high level, such that one releases oneself from the self and realises that nothing but Him truly exists. Everything else is the manifestation of His attributes and not separate from Him.

Another Noteworthy Vision

In his *Asrar al-Hikam*, Mulla Hadi Sabzawari, explaining the secret of wiping the head, says:

Wiping the head is an allusion that I am making my head and brain wet in the path of seeking the Beloved.[189]

In other words: 'I am refreshing myself to seek the Only Beloved'. And this is extremely important for every human being who has understood the purpose of creation and the goal he has to pursue. It also tells us not to get tired and always to refresh oneself for seeking the Only Beloved. Seeking the Beloved (*talab al-mahbub*), however, never ends. Whether one has not yet begun the journey, is in the beginning of the journey or enjoys very high levels of the journey, one always seeks the Beloved.

The Holy Prophet (s) is attributed to have said:

إِنَّ اللهَ اِحْتَجَبَ عَنِ الْعُقُوْلِ كَمَا احْتَجَبَ عَنِ الأَبْصَارِ وَإِنَّ الْمَلَأَ الْأَعْلَى يَطْلُبُوْنَهُ كَمَا تَطْلُبُوْنَهُ

Indeed Allah has veiled Himself from intellects the way He veiled Himself from sights, and indeed the inhabitants of the higher realm seek Him the way you seek Him.[190]

CHAPTER 7

Appreciating the Secrets of Wudu'

On Wiping the Feet

CHAPTER 7

On Wiping the Feet
(*Mash al-Rijlayn*)

Amir al-mu'minin ('a) teaches his son Muhammad ibn Hanafiyyah to recite the following supplication while wiping the feet:

اَللَّهُمَّ ثَبِّتْنِيْ عَلَى الصِّراطِ يَوْمَ تَزِلُّ فِيْهِ الأَقْدَامُ، وَاجْعَلْ سَعْيِيْ فِيْمَا يُرْضِيْكَ عَنِّيْ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِيْنَ

O Allah keep me firm on the Bridge on the Day when feet will slip, and direct my struggle to that which will make You pleased with me, O Most Merciful of the merciful ones.

The Meaning of Sirat

Many of us have a particular perception about the *sirat* (lit. path). Some regard it as a physical sharp bridge placed over Hell-Fire on a very lengthy day 'after' the days of this world, whereas others, appreciating the language of Revelation, establish that it is a spiritual path which is no different from the wayfarer himself. The path and the traveller, they opine, are the same.

If we ponder over the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) about the *sirat*, we will come to realise that the second view is correct and sound.

Earlier on we established that *yawm al-qiyamah* (*Day of Resurrection*) is not a physical day within an infinite span of time after the days of this world, but a level of reality that exists presently. The moment Almighty Allah permits, it would be unravelled for all to observe.

The *sirat* likewise is the spiritual path towards Paradise. Hence it does exist while we still inhabit this temporal world. If we carefully understand it through the help of the revelation and its authoritative interpreters, and adhere to the same, we will be reckoned to be on the *sirat* - or sometimes - we will be the *sirat* itself. Observe the following for a better understanding:

1. The Holy Qur'an says:

اهدِنَــــا الصِّرَاطَ المُستَقِيمَ. صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنعَمتَ عَلَيهِمْ غَيرِ المَغضُوبِ عَلَيهِمْ وَلاَ الضَّالِّينَ

Guide us on *the straight path. The path of those on whom You have bestowed Your bounty*, not those who have earned Your wrath nor the deviant ones. (1:6-7)

Here, Almighty Allah introduces the *sirat* as a path adopted by those whom He has blessed. And in chapter 4, verse 69 He informs us that those whom He has blessed are His obedient servants:

وَمَن يُطِعِ اللّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُوْلَـئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللّهُ عَلَيْهِم مِّنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاء وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَـئِكَ رَفِيقًا

And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger, these are with those upon whom Allah has bestowed favours from among the Prophets and the truthful and the martyrs and the good, and a goodly company are they! (4:69)

Therefore, the *sirat* in reality is the path of obedience. One should therefore not anticipate a physical road when the subject of *sirat* is mentioned.

2. The Holy Qur'an says:

أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ أَن لَّا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ. وَأَنْ اعْبُدُونِي هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِيمٌ

Did I not exhort you, O children of Adam, saying, ‘Do not worship Satan’? He is indeed your manifest enemy. *Obey Me alone; this is the straight path*. (36:60-61)

This verse clearly informs us that the *sirat* is the path of obedience to Allah alone.

Obedience and worship, however, succeeds knowledge and comprehension. The greater the knowledge, the better the obedience and worship. In the words of Imam al-Husayn (‘a), فَإِذَا عَرَفُوْهُ عَبَدُوْهُ (…when they would know Him, they would obey and worship Him…). This is the reason why we find that in some traditions there is a clear mention that the *sirat* is a path towards the knowledge of Allah. Imam al-Sadiq (‘a), having been asked about the *sirat*, said:

هُوَ الطَّرِيْقُ إِلَى مَعْرِفَةِ اللهِ

It is the path to recognising Allah

3. Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) is also reported to have said:

الصِّرَاطُ الْمُسْتَقِيمُ أَمِيْرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ (ع)

The straight path is Amir al-mu’minin (‘a).[191]

4. Amir al-mu’minin (‘a) is reported to have said:

أَنَا الصِّرَاطُ الْمَمْدُوْدُ بَيْنَ الْجَنَّةِ وَالنَّارِ

I am the path stretched between Paradise and Hell-Fire.

These traditions clearly inform us that the sirat is not a separate entity from the one who travels on it. It is the same as the traveller himself. Because Imam ‘Ali (‘a) was utterly obedient to Almighty Allah and had reached the pinnacle of possible divine cognition, he introduces himself as *al-sirat al-mustaqim.*

In his ‘*Ilm al-Yaqin*, Mulla Muhsin Fayd al-Kashani (d. 1091/1680) says:

ومن وجه آخر: الصراط عبارة عن العالم العامل الهادي إلى الله- عـز وجـل- على بصيرة، وبالجملة الأنبياء والأوصياء (ع)، فإنّ نفوسهم المقدسة طـرق إلى الله- سبحانه

In other words, *al-sirat* is one who possesses knowledge, acts accordingly, and guides others to Allah with insight. And in short, it refers to the Prophets and their successors (‘a), for their sacred souls are paths to Allah, glorified be He.

5. Once, Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) was asked about the *sirat* and he responded:

هُوَ الطَّرِيْـقُ إِلَى مَعْرِفَـةِ اللهِ عَـزَّ وَجَـلَّ وَهُمَـا صِرَاطَـان: صِرَاطٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا، وَصِرَاطٌ فِي الآخِرةِ. فَأَمَّا الصِّرَاطُ الَّذِيْ فِي الدُّنْيَا: فَهُـوَ الإِمَـامُ الْمُفْـتَرَضُ الطَّاعَـة، مَـنْ عَرَفَـهُ فِي الدُّنْيَـا وَاقْتَـدَى بِهُـدَاهُ مَـرَّ عَلَى الصِّراطِ الَّذِيْ هُوَ جِسْرُ جَهَنَّم فِيْ الآخِرَةِ؛ وَمَنْ لَـمْ يَعْرِفْـهُ فِي الدُّنْيَـا زَلَّتْ قَدَمُهُ عَنِ الصِّرَاطِ فِي الآخِرَةِ فَتردى فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّم

It is the path to the cognition of Allah, the Invincible and Magnificent; and they are two paths: a path in this world and a path in the Hereafter. As for the path in this world, it is the Imam, whom it is obligatory to obey; whosoever gains knowledge of him in this world and follows his guidance, would pass the *sirat* which is a bridge of Hell in the Hereafter; and whosoever does not know Him in this world, his foot would slip from the path in the Hereafter, and he would fall into the Hell-Fire.[192]

6. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

الصِّرَاطُ أَدَقُّ مِنَ الشَّعْرِ، وَ أَحَدُّ مِنَ السَّيْفِ، وَأَظْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ

The *sirat* is thinner than hair, sharper than the sword, and darker than the night.[193]

Explaining this tradition, Mulla Fayd al-Kashani in his ‘*Ilm al- Yaqin* says:

The perfection of the human being in his wayfaring toward the truth depends on the perfection of his two faculties:

• Knowledge and Comprehension: he must gain the truth in very fine matters of divine teachings which can be likened physically to be thinner than the hair.

• Action: he must be able to attain the trait of balance (*malakat al-'adalah*) in his faculties of desire, anger and intellect… and this can be likened to be sharper than the sword.

The esteemed mystic Sayyid Haydar Amuli (d. 787/1385) in his work on the *Inner Secrets of Worship* says:

As for what 'the two feet' means according to the inner dimension, then, according to some, they symbolise man's perceptive faculty and his ability to carry out actions.

اَللَّهُمَّ ثَبِّتْنِي عَلَى الصِّراطِ

O Allah keep me firm on the Bridge.

The phrase '*thabbitni* (keep me firm)' is indeed a very important prayer. Maintaining oneself on the *sirat* requires continual special attention from Almighty Allah. To sustain oneself on a path which is thinner than hair and sharper than a sword is not a simple endeavour. It requires continual struggle and forbearance.

The rewards however are outstanding. Consider the following:

1. The Holy Qur'an informs us that those who are steadfast on the path host the angels of Allah in their hearts:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللهُ **ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا** تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ

Indeed those who say, 'Our Lord is Allah!' *and then remain steadfast*, the angels descend upon them, [saying,] 'Do not fear, nor be grieved! Receive

the good news of the paradise which you have been promised.' (41:30)

It should be noted that the phrase '*qalu Rabbuna Allah*' in the language of the Qur'an is not merely a verbal acknowledgment, but a practical application. Furthermore, the phrase tells us that they say '*our Lord* is Allah' thus signifying that they are receptive to the lordship and training (*al-tarbiyah*) of Allah. The word *Rabb* (Lord) has been accurately selected to denote the act of divine training (*al-tarbiyah*) which is truly an act of the Lord (*Rabb*). Hence when they say that our Lord is Allah, they mean that we are submissive to the training of Allah and obedient to all that He says. In other words, they admit that they are on the straight path.

2. The Holy Qur'an informs us that steadfast people have no fear nor do they grieve. They simply have no attachment to the ephemeral entities of this world. They neither fear losing anything nor grieve because of having lost something. They have developed attachment to the Only Beloved who is Eternal and Infinite, and hence both fear and grief are meaningless.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

Indeed those who say, 'Our Lord is Allah,' *and then remain steadfast*, they will have no fear, nor will they grieve. (46:13)

3. The Holy Qur'an says:

وَأَلَّوِ اسْتَقَامُوا عَلَى الطَّرِيقَةِ لَأَسْقَيْنَاهُم مَّاء غَدَقًا

If they are steadfast on the path [of God], We shall provide them with abundant water. (72:16)

According to leading exegetes of the Qur'an, *abundant water* in this verse refers to abundant knowledge. It is narrated from Imam al-Sadiq ('a):

مَعْنَاهُ لأَفَدْنَاهُمْ عِلْمًا كَثِيْرًا يَتَعَلَّمُوْنَهُ مِنَ الأَئِمَّةِ

It means: We would have benefitted them with abundant knowledge which they would learn from the Imams.[194]

يَوْمَ تَزِلُّ فِيْهِ الأَقْدَامُ

…the Day when the feet will slip.

Intentional deviation from the straight path is different from unintentional digression. The former follows some knowledge while the latter is a product of ignorance.

In the radiant traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) we are informed of the fundamental reasons behind one falling off the bridge of salvation and slipping off from the *sirat*. Look at the following narrations:

1. Amir al-mu’minin (‘a) is reported to have said:

اَلْجَهْلُ يزلُ الْقَدَمَ

Ignorance makes the foot slip.[195]

2. He (‘a) is also reported to have said:

مَن اسْتَغْنَى بِعَقْلِهِ زَلَّ

Whosoever deems his intellect as sufficient would slip.[196]

3. In one of the supplications, we address Almighty Allah as follows:

إنْ وَكَّلْتَنِي إلى نَفْسِيْ زَلَّتْ قَدَمِيْ

If you leave me to myself, my foot would slip…

4. Imam al-Sajjad (‘a) in one of his supplications says:

وَارْحَمْ بِالْقُرْآنِ فِي مَوْقِفِ الْعَرْضِ عَلَيْكَ ذُلَّ مَقامِنا، وَثَبِّتْ بِهِ عِنْدَ اضْطِرابِ جِسْرِ جَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَ الْمَجازِ عَلَيْها زَلَلَ أَقْدامِنَا

Through the Qur'an have mercy upon the lowliness of our station at the standing place of presentation to Thee, *make firm the slips of our feet during the shaking of the bridge across Hell* on the day of passage over it.[197]

5. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said the following in *Masjid al-Khif* during his farewell pilgrimage:

أَلاَ وَإِنِّي سَائِلُكُمْ عَنْ الثَّقَلَيْنِ، قَالُوْا: يَا رَسُوْلَ اللهِ وَمَا الثَّقَلَيْنِ؟ قَالَ: كِتَابُ اللهِ اَلثِّقْلُ الاَكْبَرُ، طَرَفٌ بِيَدِ اللهِ وَطَرَفٌ بِأَيْدِيْكُمْ فَتَمَسَّكُوْا بِهِ لَنْ تَضِلُّوْا **وَلَنْ تَزِلُّوْا**، وَعِتْرَتِيْ وَأَهْلُ بَيْتِيْ

Indeed I will ask you about the two weighty things. They [the Muslims] said: O Prophet of Allah! And what are the two weighty things? He (s) said: The book of Allah is the heavier weight, a side of which is in the hand of Allah and another is with you; so adhere to it, for *neither would you stray nor slip*; and [the other weighty thing is] my progeny, and my household…[198]

In conclusion, whosoever would like to maintain himself or herself on the straight path must always adhere to the Holy Qur'an and the Ahl al-Bayt ('A). Neither relying on one's limited intellect would enable us to observe all that Almighty Allah requires of us, nor being content with our limited appreciation of the Holy Qur'an would avail us all the secrets of obedience. The Ahl al-Bayt ('a), who serve as the very epitomes of the Qur'an, touch the kernel of the Book and hence serve as the true *Hamalat al-Qur'an* (Bearers of the Qur'an) and are the true guides towards the levels of appreciation of the Book of Allah.

وَاجْعَلْ سَعْيِيْ فِيْمَا يُرْضِيْكَ عَنِّيْ

And direct my struggle to that which will make You pleased with me.

This phrase speaks of a very important level of worship to which every human being must aspire. It talks about the state of *al-rida* (divine

approval), which is only attained after great struggle. The believer, however, is always taught to have a high aspiration (*himmah* ‘*aliyah*), and therefore to pray for the state of *rida* is very apt and suitable.

The kind of *rida* that the supplicant seeks here is the highest stage of rida. This is because he asks for the *rida* of Allah.

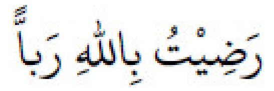
Briefly, the scholars of ethics have classified the station of *rida* into three:

1. *Al-Rida billah Rabban* (Being pleased with Allah as the Lord)

2. *Al-Rida biqada’ Allah wa qadarihi* (Being pleased with whatever Allah destines and decrees)

3. *Al-Rida bi rida Allah* (Being pleased with whatever Allah is pleased with)

In the first stage the believer is happy and approves the lordship of Almighty Allah. This naturally necessitates that he is totally submissive to Almighty Allah and loves to be submissive. He does not dislike the acts of worship and is totally happy with what Almighty Allah requires from him. Hence, when he prays, for example, instead of experiencing any kind of burden he savours its moments. There is a great difference between those who reckon *salat as a kabirah* (burden) as mentioned in verse 45 of chapter al-Baqarah of the Qur’an, and those who, akin to the Holy Prophet (s), tell the *mu’adhdhin* to recite the call of prayer so that prayer can soothe them. The Holy Prophet (s) would tell his noble companion Bilal, ‘*arihna ya Bilal* (Soothe us, O Bilal!)’. There is a beautiful supplication where we reveal this level of *rida*. We say:



I am pleased to consider Allah as my Lord.[199]

In the second stage of *rida*, the believer is always happy with whatever circumstances come about in his life. Whether he lives in poverty or affluence, sickness or health, etc., he is always happy with whatever circumstance Almighty Allah brings about for him. This is indeed a stage which is difficult to attain but not impossible.

The third stage of *rida* is an exalted station attained by the high- spirited wayfarers of the spiritual path to Allah. In this stage, the servant has no wish and desire parallel to that of Allah's. He is the vicegerent of Allah on earth (*khalifat Allah fi al-ard*), and hence loves to do whatever the Beloved wants. The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) were the best examples of this level. Imam al-Husayn ('a)'s famous dictum '*Rida Allah Rida-na Ahl al-Bayt* (The pleasure of Allah, is our pleasure, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a))', experts believe may refer to this very station. Of the well-known names of Hadrat Zahra' ('a) are *al-Radiyah* (one who is pleased with Allah), and *al-Mardiyyah* (one whom Allah is pleased with) for she enjoyed the exalted level of *rida*. In a well-known tradition from the Holy Prophet (s) we read as follows:

إِنَّ اللهَ لَيَغْضَبُ لِغَضَبِ فَاطِمَةَ وَيَرْضَى لِرِضَاهَا

Indeed Allah is angry due to the anger of Fatimah and is pleased due to her pleasure.[200]

One of the reasons why Imam 'Ali ('a) was known as al- Murtada is that Allah was pleased with Him. Ibn 'Abbas is reported to have said:

كَانَ عَلِيٌّ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ) يَتبِعُ فِي جَمِيعِ أَمْرِهِ مَرْضَاةَ اللهِ وَرَسُولِهِ

فَلِذَلِكَ سُمِّيَ المُرْتَضَى

'Ali ('a) would follow the pleasure of Allah and His Apostle in all his matters, and that is why he was called al- Murtada.[201]

The appellation *al-rida* likewise that was bestowed to Imam al- Rida ('a) signifies that he is both *al-Radi* (one who is pleased with Allah) and *al-Mardi* (one whom Allah is pleased with).

Seeking the Causes of Rida

It is obvious that after having learned about the highest station of *rida*, the human being of sound disposition will yearn to attain the same.

Having known that the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) enjoy this lofty station, we should try to follow their words and deeds, which depict nothing but Allah’s pleasure.

Although all their actions depicted the good pleasure of Allah, they have mentioned specific deeds linked with *rida Allah*. Following are some noteworthy examples:

1. Amir al-mu’minin (‘a) is reported to have said:

ثَلَاثٌ **يُبَلِّغْنَ بِالْعَبْدِ رِضْوَانَ اللهِ** كَثْرَةُ الِاسْتِغْفَارِ وَخَفْضُ الْجَانِبِ
وَكَثْرَةُ الصَّدَقَةِ

Three things make the servant attain the good pleasure of Allah: seeking forgiveness in abundance, soft behaviour, and giving *sadaqah* (charity) in plenty.[202]

2. The wise Luqman said to his son:

يَا بُنَيَّ **مَنْ يُرِدْ رِضْوَانَ اللهِ** يُسْخِطْ نَفْسَهُ كَثِيراً

O my dear little son, whosoever desires the good pleasure of Allah should often be wrathful with his self.[203]

3. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

رِضَا اللهِ مَعَ رِضَا الْوَالِدَيْنِ وَسَخَطُ اللهِ مَعَ سَخَطِ الْوَالِدَيْنِ

Allah’s pleasure is with the pleasure of the parents and His displeasure is with their displeasure.[204]

4. In a supplication, Amir al-mu’minin (‘a) says the following:

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ اَلْحَمْدُ لِلهِ الَّذِيْ **مَرْضَاتُهُ فِيْ الطَّلَبِ إِلَيْهِ**
وَالْتِمَاسِ مَا لَدَيْهِ، وَسَخَطُهُ فِيْ تَرْكِ الإِلْحَاحِ فِي الْمَسْأَلَةِ عَلَيْهِ

In the name of Allah, the All-Beneficent, the All-Merciful; All praises belong to Allah whose pleasure is in asking Him and pleading for what is with Him, and His displeasure is in abandoning persistance in asking from Him.[205]

5. Imam Abu Ja'far Muhammad al-Baqir ('a) narrates through a golden chain of narrators (*silsilat al-dhahab*) from Imam 'Ali ('a) that he said:

إِنَّ اللهَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى أَخْفَى أَرْبَعَةً فِي أَرْبَعَـةٍ: **أَخْفَى رِضَاهُ فِيْ طَاعَتِـهِ**

فَلاَ تَسْتَصْغِرَنَّ شَيْئًا مِنْ طَاعَتِهِ، فَرُبَمَا وَافَقَ رِضَاهُ وَأَنْتَ لاَ تَعْلَمُ

Indeed Allah, the All-Bounteous and Exalted has hidden four things in four: His pleasure in His obedience; and therefore do not consider insignificant any act of obedience, for perhaps it is in harmony with His pleasure and you do not know.[206]

6. Amir al-mu'minin ('a) is reported to have said:

السِّوَاكُ مَطْهَرَةٌ لِلْفَمِ وَ **مَرْضَاةٌ لِلرَّبِّ**

Brushing one's teeth cleanses the mouth and pleases the Lord.[207]

In another version of the *hadith* of *Wudu'* that we have narrated in this work, instead of ending the prayer with the divine names *Ya arhama al-Rahimin* (O Most Merciful of all the merciful ones), the phrase *Ya Dha al-Jalali wa al-Ikram*[208] (O Possessor of majesty and greatness) has been reported.

Ibn Ma'sum in his *Riyad al-Salikin* defining the divine name *Dhu al-Jalali wa al-Ikram* says:

وذو الجلال و الإكرام: أي: صاحب العظمة والكبرياء و الإحسان والإنعام

And *Dhu al-Jalali wa al-Ikram*, means the Possessor of grandeur and greatness, and benevolence and generosity.[209]

He also says:

وقيل: **ذو الجلال** أي صفات التنزيه، نحو لا جوهر ولا عرض ولا شريك له ولا جهة. **والإكرام** صفات الوجود، مثل العلم و القدرة

It has been said: *Dhu al-Jalali* refers to the divine attributes of transcendence, such as He is not a substance (*jawhar*) nor an accident (‘*arad*), nor does He have any partner (*sharik*) nor direction (*jihah*). And *al-Ikram* refers to the attributes of existence such as knowledge and strength.[210]

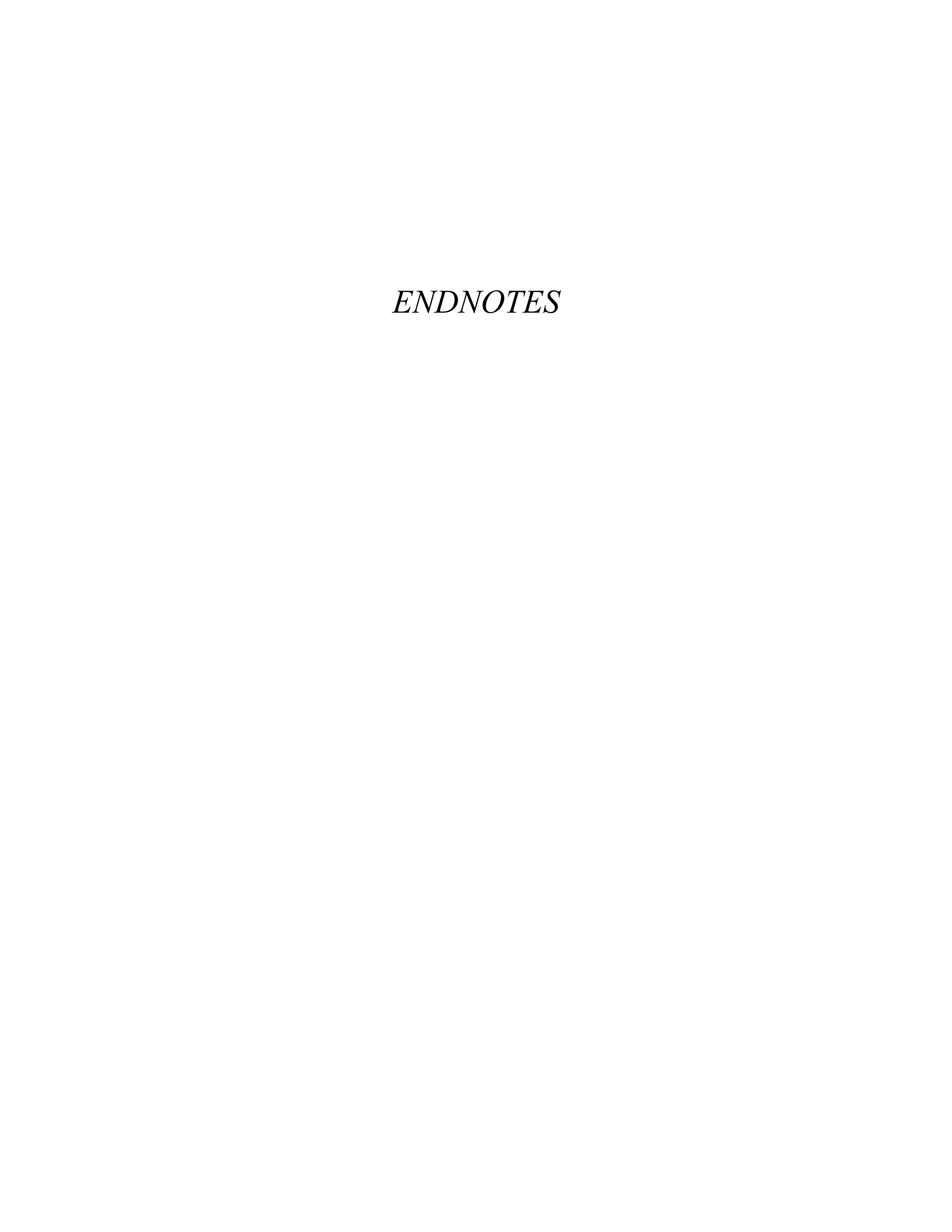
Supporting the view that the phrase ‘*Dhu al-Jalal*’ refers to divine attributes of majesty, and that the phrase ‘*wa al-Ikram*’ to divine attributes of beauty, ‘Allamah Tabataba’i says:

فذو الجلال والإكرام اسم من الأسماء الحسنى جامع بمفهومه بين أسماء الجمال وأسماء الجلال جميعا

Therefore, *Dhu al-Jalali wa al-Ikram* is a name from the most beautiful names of Allah which gathers in its concept between all the names of beauty and the names of majesty.[211]

Invoking this great name of Allah reveals the fundamental purpose of this supplication: Whenever we invoke a specific divine name, we do so due to a specific need. When we call Allah with the name *al-Shafi*, we do so, because either we are not feeling well, or we would like to cure someone else who is ill; when we call Him with the name *Ya ‘Alimu*, we do so because we would like to increase in our knowledge. In this supplication, we are calling Allah with a name that encapsulates all the divine names of *jamal* (beauty) and *jalal* (majesty). The reason for this, as can be understood from the context of the supplication, is to attain the station where we can exemplify the divine attributes of beauty and majesty. If one is enabled by Allah to remain firm on the *sirat* and struggle towards what pleases Him, he can attain the station of manifesting the attributes of divine beauty and majesty.

We pray to Allah to enable us all to unravel the secrets of His worship and to really purify us as we perform the minor ablution and try to preserve ourselves in that enlightened state.



ENDNOTES

ENDNOTES

1 It is reminiscent of verse 184 of chapter two wherein Allah, after mentioning the law of fasting and the exceptions to the law, says, ‘Allah desires ease for you, and He does not desire hardship for you (*yurid Allahu bikum al-yusr wa la yuridu bikum al-‘usr*).’

2 It is imperative to note that the above verse does not only speak about the ritual ablution, but also covers the other degrees of purification, which is beyond the scope of this limited work.

3 ‘Allamah Tahrani, *Risale-ye Lubb al-Lubab*, p. 130. This important epistle can be found in the following two websites: http://www.maarefislam.com and http://motaghin.com [28-5-2013].

4 *Misbah al-Uns* (Lamp of Intimacy) of Muhammad ibn Hamzah al-Fannari (d. 834/1414) is one of the advanced texts of theoretical gnosis taught in the traditional educational system of the Islamic Seminary by great experts in this field. It is a commentary of *Miftahu Ghayb al-Jam‘ wa al-Wujud* of Sadr al- Din ibn Ishaq al-Qunawi (d. 671/1251). The late Imam Khumayni (d. 1409/1989) wrote glosses over this important work in 1935, and it was published in 1986.

5 ‘Ali Muhiti, *Sirat-e-Suluk*, p. 37.

6 Ayatullah Hasan Zadeh Amuli, *Pandha-ye Hakimaneh*, v.3, n.19. This epistle can also be procured from the following website: http://www.ghadeer.org [28-5-2013].

7 Apparently this is an allusion to his medical condition, otherwise the great Ayatullah Bahjat was well-known for his effulgence and steadfastness in worship.

8 Shaykh ‘Abdullah *Mamaqani, Mir’at al-Rashad*, pp. 130-131.

9 Sayyid ‘Adil al-‘Alawi, *Qabasat*, p. 126, n.30. The reference is a work written by Ayatullah Sayyid ‘Adil al-‘Alawi called *Qabasat*, which can be found in his website as follows: http://www.alawy.net [28-5-2013].

10 According to ‘Abd al-Ra’uf al-Munawi (d. 1031/1621) in his *Tabaqat al-Sufiyyah*, ‘Abd al-Wahhab al-Sha‘rani is a descendent of Muhammad ibn Hanafiyyah, one of the sons of Amir al-mu’minin ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a).

11 ‘Abd al-Wahhab al-Sha‘rani, *Lawaqih al-Anwar al-Qudsiyyah fi Bayan al-‘Uhud al-Muhammadiyyah*, p. 36.

12 Muhammad ibn Ya‘qub al-Firuzabadi, *al-Bulghah fi Tarajim A'immah al- Nahw wa al-Lughah*, p. 279.

13 http://oshaghalhosein.org [27-5-2013]; http://iec-md.org [29-5-2013].

14 http://www.al-shia.org [27-5-2013], http://shiastudies.net [29-5-2013], http://www.alwelayh.net [29-5-2013], http://arabic.tebyan.net [29-5-2013].

15 http://www.akhlagh.net [29-5-2013], http://www.tebyan-zn.ir [27-5-2013]; http://erfanekeshmiri.ir [29-5-2013].

16 Martyr Murtada Mutahhari was one of the most beloved disciples of the late ‘Allamah Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i.

17 http://www.akharinnews.com [26-5-2013]; http://www.tebyan.net [29-5-2013].

18 http://www.tebyan.net [27-5-2013]; http://lib.ahlolbait.com [29-5-2013].

19 http://imam-khomeini-isf.ir [27-5-2013].

20 http://www.irdc.ir [29-5-2013].

21 Ibn Hibban (d. 354/965), *Sahih ibn Hibban*, v.3, p. 312.

22 Al-Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir Sharh al-Jami‘ al-Saghir*, v.1, p. 636.

23 ‘Allamah Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.77, pp. 308-309.

24 This is a reference to Mawla Husayn-Quli Hamadani (d. 1311 AH), the mentor of Shaykh Tabrizi in character building and wayfaring to Allah [Glosses of *Asrar al-Salat*, p. 84].

25 Mirza Jawad al-Maliki al-Tabrizi, *Asrar al-Salat*, p. 84.

26 Perhaps it refers to Sadr al-Din Kashif Dezfuli, whose birth is recorded to be 1174 AH and death as 1258 AH.

27 Habibullah al-Khu'i, *Minhaj al-Bara‘ah fi Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah*, v.19, p.317.

28 Dar al-Hadith, *Mirath-e Hadith-e Shi‘eh*, v.2.

29 http://www.hadith.net/n693-e3649-p373.html [31-5-2013].

30 Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, *Kanz al-‘Ummal*, v.16, pp. 128-129.

31 Al-Haythami, *Majma‘ al-Zawa'id*, v.5, pp. 23-24.

32 Shaykh Mufid, *al-Amali,* p. 60. In this regard there are three different traditions that clearly point out that one who constantly observes the state of *Wudu'* and then dies in the state of *Wudu'* dies as a martyr.

33 Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, *Kanz al-‘Ummal*, v.9, p. 284.

34 Ibid.

35 Rayshahri, *al-Khayr wa al-Barakah fi al-Qur'an wa al-Sunnah*, p. 203.

36 Martyr Mutahhari classifies him from among the seventh century mystics and introduces him as follows: Shaykh Najm al-Din Kubra: One of the greatest and most celebrated of mystics, the chains of many orders go back to him. He was the pupil and disciple of Shaykh Ruzbihan, and was also his son-in-law. He had many pupils and disciples, amongst whom was Baha' al- Din Walad, the father of Jalal al-Din Rumi. He lived in Khawarizm at the time of the Mongol invasions. Before his city was attacked, he was sent a message informing him that he could lead a party of his family and disciples out of the city to safety. Najm al-Din's reply was that, 'Throughout all the days of comfort I have lived alongside these people. Now that the day of difficulties has come I will not leave them.' He then manfully strapped on a sword and fought alongside the people of the city until he was martyred.

37 In his *Sirat-e Suluk, Shaykh* 'Ali Muhiti says the following about his mentor Ayatullah Hasan Zadeh Amuli: I cannot forget that Hadrat Ustad (perpetual be his esteem) one day, which [indeed] resembled a divine day (*yawmullah*), said: Purifications are in stages: apparent purification and inner purification; and each in turn has [different] stages. In the words of the Gnostic of Shabistar [Mahmud Shabistari (d. 1340)]:

Because there are four obstacles of this world (mawani chun dar in alam chahar ast),
There are also four purifications for them (taharat kardan az un ham chahar ast)

First is the purification of the external form (nukhustin paki az ahdas o anjas)
Second is clearing sin and the 'evil of the whisperers'. (Duwwum az ma'siyat wa ze sharr- e waswas)

Third is cleaning away blameworthy habits (Seyum paki ze akhlaq-e zamim-e ast)
Which keep a human being at the level of beasts (Ke ba adami hamchun bahim-e ast)

Fourth purification of the kernel from otherness, (Chaharum pakiy-e sirr ast az ghayr)
And this brings one to the end of the journey. (Ke inja muntahi migardadash sayr)

Whosoever has completed these purifications (Har un ke kard hasil in taharat)
Undoubtedly would be fit to whisper to God (Shawad bi shakk sazawar-e munajat).

[Ref: 'Ali Muhiti, *Sirat-e-Suluk*, p. 38].

38 Najm al-Din Kubra, *Adab al-Sufiyyah wa al-Sa'ir al-Ha'ir*, p. 118.

39 During the beginning of my formal Islamic education in the holy seminary of Qum from 1990, I was graced to seek ethical guidance from this eminent personality of the Islamic Seminary. I am extremely indebted to him, and pray to Allah to elevate his station in this world and the Hereafter. I would eagerly go to listen to his counsels in the effulgent mosque beside the holy sanctuary of Hadrat Ma'sumah ('a) on Thursday evenings.

40 http://www.almazaheri.ir [27-5-2013].

41 For more information of this insightful scholar refer to his website as follows: http://shojaee.org/ [30/4/2013].

42 Ustad Muhammad Shuja‘i, *Maqalat*, v.3, p. 99.

43 Ibid., p. 103.

44 Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi, *The Mathnawi*, Eng tr. R. A. Nicholson, v.V, p.94.

45 Shaykh ‘Abbas Qummi, *Mafatih al-Jinan*, pp. 163-186.

46 Shaykh Saduq, *Man la yahduruhu al-Faqih*, v.1; al-Jassas, *Ahkam al-Qur’an*, v.2, p. 416; al-Qurtubi, *Tafsir al-Qurtubi*, v.6, p. 82; Ibn al-‘Arabi, *al-Futuhat al- Makkiyyah*, v.1, p. 342.

47 Al-Jabrayn, *Sharh ‘Umdat al-Ahkam*.

48 The word *ghurr* which is the plural of *agharr* is a quality of the horse with a white mark on the upper side of its face. It is employed here to signify the light on the forehead of the believer on the Judgement Day. And the word *muhajjal* is also employed as a quality of a horse the lower side of whose hands and legs are also white. It has been employed here also to show the beauty and radiance of the believer who always performs *Wudu’*. It is interesting to note that the Holy Prophet (s) had named Amir al-mu’minin ‘Ali (‘a) as *Qa’id al-ghurr al-muhajjalin* (the Leader of the brilliant-faced and beautiful) [Shaykh al-Saduq, *al-Amali*, p.250], which reveals the fact that one who really would like to attain or maintain the inner effulgence and beauty must learn from the school of Amir al-mu’minin. He is the teacher of light and he is the teacher of how to gain light.

49 Al-Qadi al-Nu‘man al-Maghribi, *Da‘aim al-Islam*, v.1, p. 100.

50 Al-Shahid al-Thani, *Sharh al-Lum‘ah*, v.1, p. 317; al-Hindi, *Kashf al-Litham*, v.1, p. 119; al-Jawahiri, *Jawahir al-Kalam*, v.1, p. 393.

51 Ibn Faris, *Mu‘jam Maqayis al-Lughah*, v.6, p. 119.

52 Sharif Murtada, *al-Amali*, v.2, p. 59.

53 A good example of a work written on secrets of *Wudu’ is The Inner Secrets of the Path* by the great mystic Sayyid Haydar Amuli (d. 787/1385). In this work he has apportioned a whole chapter to *Wudu’* where he discusses three different levels of *Wudu’*. This book has been rendered into the English language and a digital version of the same is available at the following link: http://www.al-islam.org/innersecretsofthepath/5.htm [20-4-2013].

54 This is a reference to the following verse of the Holy Qur’an: ‘You were certainly oblivious of this. We have removed your veil from you, and so your sight is acute today (*fa basaruka al-yawma hadid*).’ (50:22)

55 Sayyid Radi al-Din ibn Tawus, *Falah al-Sa’il*, p. 124.

56 Ibid.

57 The late mystic Ayatullah Muhammad Taqi Bahjat is reported to have said: '*I have not seen anyone like Sayyid Ibn Tawus from among the former and latter Shi'ahs*.' [Rayshahri, *Zamzam-e 'Irfan*, p. 99]. On many occasions Ayatullah Bahjat is reported to have said: 'The seminarian who has not seen the works of Sayyid Ibn Tawus, is like he who has not seen anything. (*talabe-i ke kitabha-ye Sayyid ra nadide bashad misl-e in ast ke hich nadide ast*)' [http://www.tebyan.net] (3-5-2013).

58 Sayyid Radi al-Din ibn Tawus, *Falah al-Sa'il*, p. 124..

59 In the course of our exposition wherever we deemed necessary we have alluded to some differences of the other versions of the tradition.

60 He was called Ibn al-Hanafiyyah after his mother, Khawlah bint Ja'far who was known as Hanafiyyah (the Hanafi woman) after her tribe Banu Hanifah. When the people of Yamamah were declared apostates for refusing to pay *zakat* and were killed and their womenfolk were brought to Madinah as slave girls, this lady also came with them. When her tribesmen came to know of this, they approached Amir al-mu'minin 'Ali ('a) and requested him to save her from the blemish of slavery and protect her family honour and prestige. Consequently he set her free after purchasing her and married her, whereafter Muhammad was born.

61 Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Saffar (d. 290/902-903) also known as Abu Ja'far al-Qummi, was a companion of Imam Hasan al-'Askari ('a) and a resident of Qum. He is known to be among the reliable and trustworthy narrators of *hadith* by well-known scholars of '*ilm al-rijal* like 'Abdallah al-Asadi al-Najashi (d. 450/1058), who describes him in his authoritative work *Rijal al-Najashi as 'thiqatun 'azim al-qadr* (highly esteemed and trustworthy)' [al-Najashi, *Rijal al-Najashi*, p. 354].

62 Ayatullah Jawadi Amuli comments on the version of this tradition narrated in *al-Mahasin* of al-Barqi.

63 Ayatullah Jawadi Amuli, *Asrar al-Salat*, pp. 16-17.

64 This work has been rendered into the Persian language by Shaykh 'Abd al- Rahim 'Aqiqi Bakhshayishi (d. 1433), and the contemporary scholar Sayyid Muhammad Rida Ghiyathi Kirmani.

65 *Wudu'* is a canonical ablution that prepares one to begin the obligatory prayer prescribed by Allah for mankind. It is not aimed to cleanse the physical parts of the human being, but to purify his spiritual dimension.

66 Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said about the phrase '*O you who believe*' in the Qur'an that: 'the pleasure derived from listening to the divine call removes the fatigue and difficulty of worship (*ladhhatu ma fi al-nida' azala ta'b al-'ibada wa al-'ana*)' (al-Rawandi, *Fiqh al-Qur'an*, v.1, p. 72).

67 A reference to the successively narrated tradition of *al-Thaqalayn:* The Holy Prophet (s) said: 'I leave behind for you two weighty things (*al- thaqalayn*), the book of Allah and my progeny, the Ahl al-Bayt (s), and indeed they would never part from one another until they come to me at the Fountain.' (Al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, v.5, p. 17).

68 When asked about the verse '…Say, Allah suffices as a witness between me and you, and he who possesses the knowledge of the Book.' (13:43), Imam al-Baqir ('a) said: 'He means us, 'Ali ('a) being the foremost, superior, and best of us after the Prophet (s). (*iyya-na 'ana, wa 'Aliyyun 'alayhi al-salam awwalu-na wa afdalu-na wa khayru-na ba'd an-Nabiyyi sall Allahu 'alayhi wa alihi*).' (Sayyid Hashim al-Bahrani (d. 1107/1695), *al-Burhan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, v.3, p. 273).

69 It is important to know that all the four Sunni schools of thought believe today that the feet must be washed and not wiped. This is while history tells us that the washing of the feet began during a part of 'Uthman ibn 'Affan's caliphate. He is reported to have practically showed the people how to do *Wudu'* and then attributed this to the Holy Prophet (s). Prior to him, all the Muslims would wipe their feet, and there was no contradiction among them. For a detailed historical discussion on this subject, the esteemed readers are advised to refer to Sayyid 'Ali Shahristani's *Wudu' al-Nabi*, a detailed exposition of the history of the *Wudu'* of the Holy Prophet (s), and perhaps a unique masterpiece on the subject.

70 Ibrahim al-Halabi, *Ghunyat al-Mutamalli fi Sharh Munyat al-Musalli*, p. 16.

71 Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, v.3, p. 47.

72 Al-Suyuti, *al-Durr al-Manthur fi Tafsir al-Ma'thur*, v.2, p. 262.

73 Ibid.

74 Ibid.

75 Shaykh Saduq, *al-Amali*, p. 408.

76 http://www.almazaheri.ir [28-5-2013].

77 Sayyid Hashim Bahrani, *al-Burhan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, v.3, p. 80.

78 'Allamah Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.80, p. 370.

79 Ibid., v.77, p. 310.

80 Shaykh Saduq, *al-Khisal*, p. 181.

81 Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Barqi, *al-Mahasin*, v.1, p. 4.

82 Ibn Faris, *Mu'jam Maqayis al-Lughah*, v.3, p. 129; Also see: Mustafawi, *al-Tahqiq*, v.5, p. 38.

83 'Allamah Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.77, p. 302.

84 Shaykh ‘Ali Muhiti, *Sirat-e Suluk*, p. 37.

85 Shaykh Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Fahd Hilli (d. 841/1438), *‘Uddat al- Da‘i*, p. 218.

86 Al-Shahid al-Thani, *Rasa’il al-Shahid al-Thani*, p. 125.

87 Mulla Sadra, *al-Mabda’ wa al-Ma‘ad*, p. 556.

88 Mulla Mazandarani, *Sharh Usul al-Kafi*, v.8, p. 53.

89 Agha Najafi Isfahani, *Isharat Imaniyyah*, p. 211.

90 Ibn Shu‘bah, *Tuhaf al-‘Uqul*, p. 246.

91 Shaykh Baha’i, *al-Arba‘in*, p. 706.

92 Shaykh al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, v.2, p. 84.

93 Shaykh Baha’i, *al-Arba‘in*, p. 709.

94 Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, v.1, p. 214.

95 Refer to chapter 21, verse 90 of the Holy Qur’an.

96 Shaykh Baha’i, *al-Arba‘in*, p. 708.

97 ‘Allamah Tabataba’i, *Risalat al-Wilayah*, p. 72.

98 Al-Shahid al-Thani, *Rasa’il al-Shahid al-Thani*, p. 125.

99 Rayshahri, *Mizan al-Hikmah*, v.1, p. 759.

100 ‘Allamah Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.76, p. 230.

101 Shaykh ‘Abdullah Mamaqani, *Mir’at al-Rashad*, p. 49. [*Mir’at al-Rashad* has been digitalised and is available at the following website: http://www.alseraj.net [15-6-2013]].

102 Ali bin Babawayh al-Qummi, *Fiqh al-Rida* (‘a), p. 69.

103 The noun ‘face’ does not accurately correspond to the word *wajh* if the etymology is considered. According to one opinion, the word face is derived from the Latin word facies, which means form and appearance. [Ref: http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/face [23-6-2013]].

104 Mustafawi, *al-Tahqiq fi Kalimat al-Qur’an*; ‘Allamah Tabataba’i, *al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur’an*, v.8, p. 74.

105 This must not be taken literally for Allah is beyond the senses of sight as well as the visions of the hearts. Seeing or visioning Allah refers to a transcendent vision of the hearts which is not a complete encompassment of the divine essence whatsoever. It is a vision of divine attributes according to the limited comprehension of the wayfarer to Allah. In this meaning, such vision can transpire while one is in this world, and also when one is in the Hereafter. However, in order for one

to achieve that, one should undergo self-discipline and undertake a spiritual journey guided by those who have themselves covered the journey and have the ability to take others to the same path.

106 Ibn al-‘Arabi, *al-Futuhat al-Makkiyyah*, v.5, p. 188.

107 Al-Shahid al-Thani, *al-Musannafat al-Arba‘ah*, p. 237; al-Shahid al-Thani, *Rasa’il al-Shahid al-Thani*, p. 113.

108 Mulla Hadi Sabzawari, *Nibras al-Huda*, p. 91; In expounding on the above couplet, he says: (*Idh lazimun tathirukum khawadima* - When it is compulsory on you to purify the servants): Servants here refer to the members of the body, for they and the faculties they contain and are related to, are all the servants of the intellectual soul (*al-nafs al-natiqah*). (*fattuhru lil isfahbud* - Then the purification of the isfahbud [lit. commander in chief]): which [here] is the heart (*fu’ad*); (*ja alzima* - adhere to it!). This is because it is a most unpleasant thing that a great person comes to a sovereign and discovers the sovereign’s servants and special dependents are clean, whereas the sovereign himself is dirty.

And also (*Idh* - when) (*wajibun ‘alaykum* - it is compulsory on you) (*tathiru qishrin aqrabu* - purification of the nearmost shell); Here *aqrabu* (nearmost) refers to the body of the human being which is a shell of the soul; *wa ab‘adu* (as well as the furthermost): refers to the clothes of a human being which is the shell of the shell, must be clean for being honoured to serve the Real Sovereign. (*fa tuhru lubbin* - so the purity of the core) therefore, (*awjabu* –is more compulsory).

109 Ayatullah Hasan Zadeh Amuli, *Sharh al-Manzumah*, v.5, p. 311.

110 Shaykh ‘Abbas Qummi, *Mafatih al-Jinan*, p. 163.

111 Ibid., Supplications for Ramadan, p. 312.

112 Ibid., pp. 398-399.

113 Ibid., Du‘a ‘Arafah.

114 ‘Allamah Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.98, p. 224.

115 Mulla Hadi Sabzawari, *Sharh al-Asma’ al-Husna*, v.1, p. 30.

116 ‘Allamah Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.47, p. 67.

117 Shaykh Huwayzi, *Tafsir Nur al-Thaqalayn*, v.3, p. 204.

118 Shaykh Ihsa’i, ‘*Awali al-La’ali*, v.1, p. 360.

119 ‘Allamah Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.7, p. 217.

120 Shaykh Saduq, *al-Amali*, p. 156.

121 ‘Allamah Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.97, p. 296.

122 Ibid., v.57, p. 55.

123 Ibid., v.19, p. 125.

124 Al-Barqi, *al-Mahasin*, v.1, p. 181.

125 Ibid., p. 265.

126 Al-Qummi, *Qurb al-Isnad*, pp. 101-102.

127 This is an allusion to one that has firm belief in the *wilayah* (guardianship) of the infallible Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), without which belief is incomplete.

128 Shaykh Saduq, *al-Amali*, p. 545.

129 ‘Allamah Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.99, p. 131.

130 In a genitive construction (*idafah*) the first term which is called *mudaf* (the thing added) governs the second term which is called *mudaf ilayhi* (the thing added to).

131 Sayyid Hashim Bahrani, *Hilyat al-Abrar*, v.2, p. 123.

132 Al-Shahrudi, *Mustadrakatu ‘Ilmu Rijal al-Hadith*, v.1, p. 679.

133 Those acquainted with discussions on theoretical gnosis can refer to the the exposition of *Tamhid al-Qawa*‘id writted by the contemporary sage - Ayatullah Jawadi Amuli.

134 Shaykh Saduq, *al-Muqni*‘, p. 10.

135 Sayyid ‘Ali Madani, *Riyad al-Salikin*, v.1, p. 345.

136 ‘Allamah Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.7, p. 327.

137 Rayshahri, *Mizan al-Hikmah*, v.3, p. 2185.

138 ‘Allamah Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.42, p. 9.

139 Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Qummi, *Mi’at Manqabah*, p. 64.

140 ‘Allamah Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.7, p. 296.

141 Ibid., v.66, p. 370.

142 Ibid., v.89, p. 184.

143 Ibid.

144 Rayshahri, *Mizan al-Hikmah*.

145 Muhammad bin Sulayman al-Kafi, *Manaqib Amir al-mu’minin*, v.2, p. 336.

146 Shaykh Saduq, *Thawab al-A‘mal*, p. 114.

147 Ibid., p. 110.

148 Ibn Qulawayh, *Kamil al-Ziyarat*, p. 269.

149 Mazandarani, *Sharh Usul al-Kafi*, v.8, p. 373.

150 ‘Allamah Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v. 41, p. 40.

151 Ibid., v.76, p. 24.

152 Al-Fayd al-Kashani, *al-Tafsir al-Safi*, v.3, p. 316.

153 Al-Barqi, *al-Mahasin*, v.1, p. 54.

154 Al-Shaykh al-Baha’i, *al-Arba‘un* [translated by ‘Aqiqi Bakhshayishi], p. 549.

155 Ibid.

156 Ibid.

157 Ibid., p. 550.

158 Mulla Sadra, *al-Asfar al-Arba‘ah*, v.9, p. 426.

159 Al-Wasiti, ‘*Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa‘iz*, p. 396.

160 Rayshahri, *Mizan al-Hikmah*, v.1, p. 624.

161 ‘Allamah Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.47, p. 383.

162 Ibid., v.17, p. 84.

163 Muhaqqiq Ardabili, *Majma‘ al-Fa’idah*, v.4, p. 286.

164 Shaykh Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, v.7, p. 157.

165 Hurr al-‘Amili, *Wasa’il al-Shi‘ah*, v.41, p. 375.

166 Mirza Nuri, *Mustadrak al-Wasa’il*, v.3, p. 23.

167 Shaykh Saduq, ‘*Uyun Akhbar al-Rida*, v.2, p. 269.

168 Shaykh Tusi, *al-Amali*, p. 533.

169 Shaykh Huwayzi, *Tafsir Nur al-Thaqalayn*, v.5, p. 61.

170 Shaykh Saduq, ‘*Ilal al-Sharayi*‘, v.1, p. 280.

171 Shaykh Saduq, *al-Amali*, p. 258.

172 Al-Saffar, *Basa’ir al-Darajat*, p. 81.

173 Shaykh Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, v.1, p. 145.

174 Al-Barqi, *al-Mahasin*, v.1, p. 280.

175 Mulla Hadi Sabzawari in his Nibras al-Huda while explaining the secrets of *Wudu’* says: ‘Your spiritual “right” is the intellect, and what is meant by it is the practical intellect (*yaminuka al-ma‘nawi huwa al-‘aql wa al-murad bihi al-‘aql al-‘amali*).’ [Mulla Hadi Sabzawari, *Nibras al-Huda*, p. 92].

176 Shaykh Huwayzi, *Tafsir Nur al-Thaqalayn*, v.5, p. 382.

177 Ayatullah Muhammadi Rayshahri, *al-'Aql wa al-Jahl fi al-Kitab wa al-Sunnah*, p. 25.

178 Mulla Hadi Sabzawari, *Nibras al-Huda*, p. 92. The word *mash'amah* is an allusion to verse 56:9 where Allah says: 'And the people of evil omen (*ashab al-mash'amah*) and what are the people of evil omen' or verse 90:19 where Allah says: 'But those who defy Our signs, they are the people of evil omen (*ashab al-mash'amah*).'

179 Shaykh Saduq, *Fada'il al-Ashhur al-Thalathah*, p. 87.

180 Al-'Ayyashi, *Tafsir al-'Ayyashi*, v.2, p. 302.

181 'Allamah Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.8, p. 252.

182 Tabarsi, *Tafsir Jawami' al-Jami'*, v.3, p. 42.

183 Shaykh Tusi, *Tafsir al-Tibyan*, v.7, p. 302.

184 Al-Mashhadi, *Tafsir Kanz al-Daqa'iq wa Bahr al-Ghara'ib*, v.9, p. 60.

185 Ibn Faris, *Mu'jam Maqayis al-Lughah*, v.4, p. 425.

186 Mustafawi, *al-Tahqiq fi Kalimat al-Qur'an al-Karim*, v.7, p. 276.

187 'Allamah Tabataba'i, *al-Mizan*, v.4, p. 38. See also volume 16, p. 215 on the reality of *shukr*.

188 Shaykh Saduq, *al-Amali*, p. 258.

189 Mulla Hadi Sabzawari, *Asrar al-Hikam*, p. 480.

190 Ibn Ma'sum, *Riyad al-Salikin*, v.1, p. 317.

191 Shaykh Saduq, *Ma'ani al-Akhbar*, v.2, p. 32.

192 Al-Kashani, *'Ilm al-Yaqin*, p. 1180.

193 Ibid.

194 Shaykh Tabarsi, *Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan*, v.10, p. 151.

195 Rayshahri, *Mizan al-Hikmah*, v.1, p. 462.

196 Ibid., v.3, p. 2057.

197 Imam al-Sajjad ('a), *al-Sahifah al-Sajjadiyyah*, Supplication 42.

198 'Allamah Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.32, p. 152.

199 Shaykh Saduq, *Thawab al-A'mal*, p. 26.

200 'Allamah Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.43, p. 19.

201 Ibid., v.35, p. 60.

202 Ibid., v.75, p. 81.

203 Ibid., v.67, p. 78.

204 Al-Nisaburi, *Rawdat al-Wa'izin*, p. 368.

205 'Allamah Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.78, p. 193.

206 Shaykh Saduq, *al-Khisal*, p. 209.

207 Shaykh Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, v.6, p. 495.

208 The word *ikram* comes from the root *k.r.m*., which signifies 'greatness in oneself'. Ibn Durayd in his *al-Tahdhib* defines the word *karim* as: '*ismun jami'un likulli ma yuhmadu* (An all-comprehensive name that includes every praiseworthy attribute)'. Ibn Faris in his Mu'jam defines the root *k.r.m*. as 'loftiness in a thing in itself or loftiness in a trait from among the traits of something'. Al-Mustafawi opines that the root *k.r.m*. signifies greatness in oneself. Hence, *ikram* confers the connotation of bestowing greatness and perfection. When we call Allah as the Possessor of *jalal* and *ikram* we mean that He is free from every imperfection, and is the Bestower of greatness and perfection. In fact the whole philosophy of *Wudu'* is encapsulated in this final supplication. *Wudu'* according to a tradition of the Holy Prophet (s) is light. And the quality of light is not only to appear, but also to make others appear. So by asking Allah to keep us steadfast on the path and enable us to struggle to attain His good pleasure, we are asking Him to enlighten our being with the traits of perfection. And since He is *Dhu al-Jalali wa al-Ikram* he would undoubtedly do that.

209 Ibn Ma'sum, *Riyad al-Salikin*, v.7, p. 175.

210 Ibid., v.3, p. 97.

211 'Allamah Tabataba'i, *al-Mizan*, v.19, p. 101.

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40. *Man la yahduruhu al-Faqih* by al-Shaykh al-Saduq

41. *Nibras al-Huda* by Mulla Hadi Sabzawari

42. *Basa'ir al-Darajat* by al-Saffar

43. *Fada'il al-Ashhur al-Thalathah* by al-Shaykh al-Saduq

44. *Tafsir al-'Ayyashi* by al-'Ayyashi

45. *Mafatih al-Ghayb* by Fakhr al-Din al-Razi

46. *Ma'ani al-Akhbar* by al-Shaykh al-Saduq

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